THE Nation.

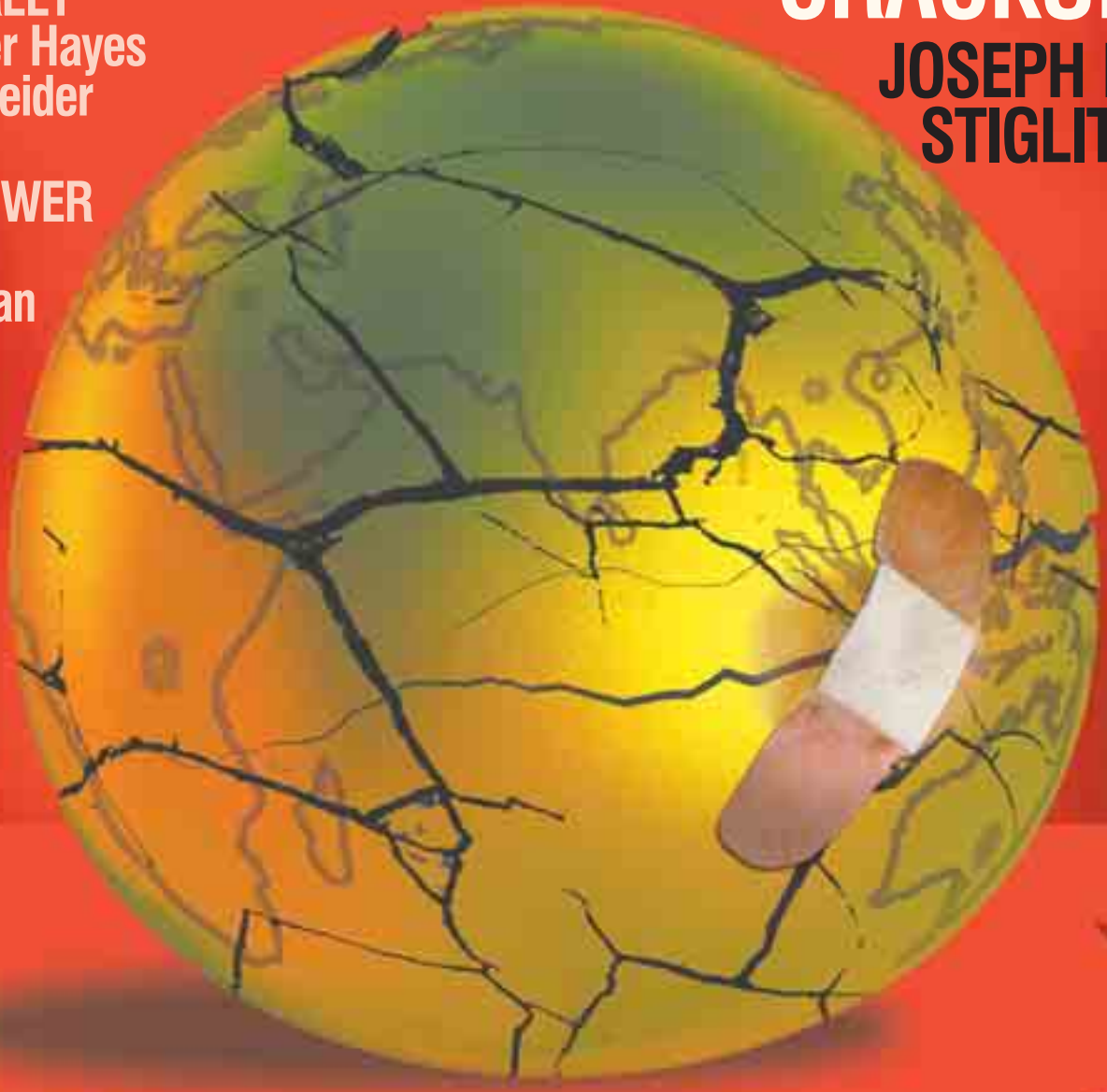
IRAN'S NEW REVOLUTIONARIES

A REAL CURE FOR THE GLOBAL ECONOMIC CRACKUP

JOSEPH E. STIGLITZ

REGULATING WALL STREET
Christopher Hayes
William Greider

QUEER POWER IN UTAH
Lisa Duggan



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Exchange

The Origin of the Specious

St. Louis

William Deresiewicz attacks literary Darwinism on two fronts ["Adaptation," June 8]. He argues that it is dependent on evolutionary psychology (EP), which he characterizes as pseudoscience, and he rejects its tendencies toward general ideas. The argument that EP is pseudoscientific is false. EP locates its central causal principles in evolutionary biology, and it appeals to the same criteria of empirical validity used by all legitimate sciences. Deresiewicz evidently knows almost nothing about the "mainstream biology" he so casually invokes, and he knows even less about paleoanthropology, paleoarchaeology, cognitive and affective neuroscience, behavioral ecology, behavioral genetics, developmental psychology, sex research, game theory and life-history theory. All these fields feed into the central findings of "evolutionary psychology." Findings from these fields form an interlocking body of facts used to test empirical hypotheses. If Deresiewicz had any knowledge of this subject, he would not make gaffes like his claim that findings in EP "have no support in genetics." To take just the grossest example, sex differences are rooted in genetics, and sex differences are, of course, central to evolutionary thinking about reproductive psychology. By rejecting general ideas in favor of unique, qualitative moments, Deresiewicz appeals to a half-truth that is the foundational principle of reactionary humanism. The whole truth is that literature and our responses to it involve elemental, universal aspects of human experience and also unique experiences produced by individual differences and unique environmental conditions. Deresiewicz offers his plangent *cri de coeur* "Back to the Particular!" as the only possible salvation of the humanities. The only possible forms of salvation are real knowledge and good sense. We won't get there by adopting a negative stance toward the integration of specifically literary knowledge and modern psychology.

Joseph Carroll

Auckland, New Zealand

William Deresiewicz critiques a notion of evolutionary psychology fifteen years out of date and certainly not held by the evolutionary literary critics he focuses on. Old-style, narrow-school EP did make large armchair claims, many unfounded, but the most trenchant critiques of their claims and assumptions have come from others committed to an evolutionary account of human nature. Scientists like David Sloan Wilson, Robert Boyd and Peter Richerson have been able to use biological evidence and logic to critique the idea of a reified Pleistocene and a human nature static since then and to show the force of multilevel selection and gene-culture co-evolution. Revisions within EP have transformed the attitude of formerly dismissive biologists and psychologists. Since these revisions allow far more room for culture, cooperation and imagination, and have been essential to the work of the most active evolutionary literary critics, it is pointless for Deresiewicz to criticize such critics for views they reject.

Deresiewicz writes that "literary studies is not concerned with large classes of phenomena of which individual cases are merely interchangeable and aggregable examples. It is concerned, precisely, with individual cases, and very few of them at that: the rare works of value that stand out from the heap of dross produced in every age." Literary studies may choose to deal with large-scale trends or individual cases or something in between. Evolutionary approaches do not focus only on universals. Evolutionary anthropology can explain local cultural reactions to local ecological conditions. Evolutionary personality psychology adds new tools to the study of individual differences. Behavioral genetics focuses intently on explaining individual difference. My *On the Origin of Stories* focuses no less intently on explaining why the *Odyssey*, uniquely, has been read and loved for nearly three millennia and why Dr. Seuss stands supreme among writers for young children. I also offer a model for literary explanation that stresses the need for four

(continued on page 24)

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since 1865

Obama's Stonewall

In 1996, when Barack Obama was running for the Illinois Senate, he was asked in a survey by *Outlines*, a gay community newspaper in Chicago, if he supported same-sex marriage.

COMMENT

Unlike most candidates, who merely indicated yes or no, Obama took the unusual step of typing in his response, to which he affixed his signature. Back then not a single state permitted same-sex marriage, and sodomy was a crime. Nonetheless, Obama took a position on the progressive edge of the Democratic Party, and he did so with unmistakable clarity: "I favor legalizing same-sex marriages, and would fight efforts to prohibit such marriages."

Since then, as Obama traced his dazzling arc to the presidency, his stance on gay rights has become murkier, wordier, less courageous, more Clintonian. During his 2004 US Senate bid, he stated that he supports domestic partnerships and civil unions instead of same-sex marriage. When speaking to gay audiences, he explained his new position as "primarily just…a strategic issue." But on bigger stages he cited his Christian faith as grounds for his belief that marriage is between a man and a woman, a view he reiterated during the 2008 presidential election even while he also asserted, inconsistently, that religion should not dictate a state's approach to gay rights.

As president, Obama has made similar equivocations on gay rights. As a senator and as a candidate, he won the vocal support of the vast majority of gays and lesbians by calling for the repeal of both the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) and the miserable failure that is "don't ask, don't tell," and by supporting full federal partnership rights (but not same-sex marriage) and the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA), which would make it illegal to fire someone because of his or her sexual orientation. But he has so far spent no political capital to turn these promises into reality. Quite to the contrary, Obama's slide hit what one hopes will be a nadir on June 12 when his administration filed a brief defending the legality of DOMA by comparing same-sex marriage to incest and pedophilia.

It is impossible to accept that a president who owes so much to movements for civil rights and social justice, never mind the Obama of 1996, believes in such right-wing bigotry; the only plausible explanation can be one of political calculation. The memory of Bill Clinton's early failure to integrate the military, as well as the aftermath of the 2004 election, when same-sex marriage was blamed for John Kerry's loss, looms large in the minds of top Democratic strategists. Guided by veterans of the Clinton-era culture wars like chief of staff Rahm Emanuel, the prevailing wisdom in the White House seems to be that a forward push on gay rights can only endanger what the Democratic Party hopes will be a lasting majority and would squander precious political capital better used on issues like healthcare and economic reform.

Such logic, however, is quickly becoming obsolete. Six states have legalized gay marriage. Democrats like Connecticut Senator Christopher Dodd and New Jersey Governor Jon Corzine have renounced support for civil unions and embraced same-sex marriage, with Corzine having done so as a centerpiece of his re-election bid. Gen. John Shalikashvili, Clinton's chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and a cadre of military leaders have publicly called for an end to "don't ask, don't tell." Huge majorities of Americans, 89 percent in a 2008 Gallup poll, support workplace rights for gays and lesbians. Steve Schmidt, John McCain's campaign manager, and former Vice President Cheney have announced their support for same-sex mar-

Inside

Exchange

2 The Origin of the Specious
JOSEPH CARROLL, BRIAN BOYD AND WILLIAM DERESIEWICZ

Editorials & Comment

3 Obama's Stonewall
RICHARD KIM

4 Iran's New Revolutionaries
BABAK SARFARAZ

5 Noted

6 Capitolism
Bucking the Banks
CHRISTOPHER HAYES

7 Obama's False Reform
WILLIAM GREIDER

Columns

6 Deadline Poet
On a Confession of Adultery…
CALVIN TRILLIN

9 Beat the Devil
Twittergasms
ALEXANDER COCKBURN

10 Subject to Debate
Muslim Women's Rights, Continued
KATHA POLLITT

Articles

11 A Real Cure for the Global Economic Crackup
Restructure the world's economy to ensure a more stable, more shared prosperity.
JOSEPH E. STIGLITZ

16 What's Right With Utah
In the reddest state in the country, Salt Lake City's queers are making big love.
LISA DUGGAN

22 Our Jobless Recovery
The solution to the jobs crisis depends on manufacturing and trade policy reform.
LEO HINDERY JR. AND LEO W. GERARD

Books & the Arts

25 FALLADA: Little Man, What Now? • The Drinker • Every Man Dies Alone
BENJAMIN LYTAL

31 DE LA GRANGE: Gustav Mahler: A New Life Cut Short (1907–1911)
DAVID SCHIFF

34 Ground Control (POEM)
ALAN GILBERT

35 FILMS
The Beaches of Agnès
Afghan Star
STUART KLAWANS

COVER DESIGN BY GENE CASE & STEPHEN KLING/AVENGING ANGELS

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News & Analysis

John Nichols on Mark Sanford

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Video: *Nation/National Review* debate: Should the US police the world?

Poll: What healthcare system do you want?

Web letters: Express yourself online

riage; and Utah's Republican governor, Jon Huntsman, came out in favor of civil unions, a switch that has not eroded his popularity in Mormon country one bit. At this rate, Obama is in danger of being outpaced on gay rights not just by the American people but by the nonsuicidal wing of the Republican Party.

There is still time for a course correction. In the wake of an uproar from gay activists and progressives, Obama signed a memo extending limited benefits to partners of gay federal employees (but not healthcare or inheritance rights); reiterated his intent to repeal DOMA; and voiced support for legislation that would, in the interim, give healthcare to same-sex partners of federal workers. But words are no longer enough. Now is the time for Obama to act with the full authority of his office and his character to pass a gay rights agenda that, in the end, will be seen as neither particularly radical nor particularly partisan but as a simple matter of fairness under the law.

A promising first step would be to fast-track passage of ENDA. A previous version passed the House by a vote of 235 to 184 in 2007, with thirty-five Republicans in favor, before dying under the threat of a Bush veto. Congressman Barney Frank introduced a stronger version that includes protections for transgender people on June 24, just before the fortieth anniversary of the Stonewall riots in New York City, which ignited the modern gay rights movement.

In those forty years, and especially in the past decade, the arc of the moral universe, as Obama is fond of saying on other matters, has bent toward justice. So much so that the question is no longer, Can the Obama administration afford to support gay rights with full-throated passion—but rather, Can it afford not to?

RICHARD KIM

Iran's New Revolutionaries

Tehran

COMMENT

For those steeped in the arcane art of Khamenei-watching, June 19 holds a special significance. On that day, after issuing his much-anticipated ultimatum to the people of Iran, the Supreme Leader showed a side of himself never before seen in public: while finishing his blood-soaked sermon with a vow of martyrdom, instead of looking bold and defiant, he looked weak and pathetic. Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, the man whose mien has inspired fear and awe in millions of people, actually had a lump in his throat. He fought back tears before tens of millions of bemused and perplexed viewers because in less than three weeks' time, a system he had helped perfect—rule by a supreme religious leader—was showing signs of unraveling.

Pressure had been mounting as accusations swirled that Khamenei and the top brass of the Revolutionary Guards—working in concert with President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad—had perpetrated a vast election fraud aimed at defeating reformist candidate Mir-Hossein Moussavi and simultaneously purging the government of recalcitrant elements, beginning with the faction led by longtime Khamenei nemesis Hashemi Rafsanjani. Apparently confident of success, the alleged conspirators did not foresee the

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Noted.

HEALTH AND WEALTH: As the White House begins a push for healthcare reform, it starts at a significant disadvantage, perhaps as large as $1.38 billion. According to the **Center for Responsive Politics**, a nonpartisan group that tracks campaign contributions and lobbying expenditures, that's the sum that five industries—pharmaceuticals/health products, insurance, health services/HMOs, hospitals/nursing homes and health professionals—spent lobbying lawmakers from 2007, the first full year Democrats controlled Congress, to the most recent first-quarter filings for 2009.

In fact, starting in 2006 healthcare interests have spent even more than the financial services industry to sway lawmakers. Since 1998, three of the top ten lobbying spenders have sought to influence healthcare policy; the American Medical Association's $204 million in the past decade was second only to the perennial top lobbyist, the US Chamber of Commerce. Beyond lobbying, hundreds of millions have been spent by healthcare interests in campaign contributions in the past two election cycles alone.

So what does all this money buy? According to **Nate Silver**, renowned number-cruncher and blogger at **FiveThirtyEight.com**, a whole lot. Silver crafted a method to measure how lobbying might be shaping Democratic senators' votes on a healthcare bill with a public option—which 76 percent of Americans support, according to a recent NBC/*Wall Street Journal* poll—and concluded that the low sum of $60,000 in campaign contributions over the past six years would cut in half the odds of a centrist Democrat supporting the plan.

SEBASTIAN JONES

LEADING NOW: **Kim Gandy** never figured out how to pull a punch. In eight years as president of the **National Organization for Women** (NOW), Gandy staked out positions that defined American feminism as forceful and unlimited in its reach. After the slaying of **George Tiller**, the Kansas physician whose work made real the promise of reproductive rights, Gandy declared, "Bringing the killers to justice is not enough—the Justice Department and the Department of Homeland Security must root out and prosecute as domestic terrorists and violent racketeers the criminal enterprise that has organized and funded criminal acts for decades." NOW badges shouted, Murder Is Not Pro-Life.

When Barack Obama's Justice Department filed a brief describing the Defense of Marriage Act as "a cautious policy of federal neutrality," Gandy shot back, "Neutrality is not what DOMA is about. This law flat-out favors one form of legal marriage over another. The Obama administration has no business treating a discriminatory law as neutral and should instead be working with Congress to develop legislation repealing this harmful law. The Bush years are over—we expect much better from our new president."

It was during those years that Gandy led NOW as an opposition force on virtually every issue. In her view, there were no limits on "women's issues." NOW's logo was temporarily updated to insert a peace symbol in the "O." Economic justice, media reform, immigration and healthcare moved to the top of NOW's agenda—alongside commitments to equality, diversity and abortion rights. Gandy's successor, former NOW vice president **Terry O'Neill** (backed by former NOW president **Patricia Ireland**), won a spirited contest with current NOW veep **Latifa Lyles** (backed by Gandy) with promises to make the organization even more activist and progressive—an exciting prospect, as Gandy was no slouch on those fronts.

JOHN NICHOLS

DISPLACED IN PAKISTAN: While the mainstream press is lately blanketed with worrying headlines about Pakistan's internal struggle, one in which many Western nations claim to have a vested interest, relatively little is being reported on the escalating humanitarian crisis of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the Swat Valley. Estimates from the **United Nations** put the IDP population, mostly Pashtun and living in camps or with relatives (some eighty to a house), at more than 2 million—a figure that far exceeds the number of IDPs in Rwanda.

As of June 22, however, the UN had received less than 35 percent of the $543 million it has requested from donor nations to aid Pakistan's IDPs. With the sole exception of the United States, which has given $110 million and promised $200 million more, wealthy Western nations and, more conspicuously, the Arab world, have contributed very little. Without further donations, the UN, as well as several other aid agencies including **Oxfam** and **Save the Children**, could run out of money very soon. With the monsoon season on its way, the situation for Swat Valley IDPs is about to become even more dire, with a projected rise in malaria and potentially lethal stomach ailments. **John Holmes**, the UN humanitarian chief, has also warned that an army incursion into South Waziristan could produce another half-million IDPs.

Saddled with $7.6 billion in IMF debt, Pakistan's tenuous democracy is simply not equipped to tackle the IDP problem without aid. Given the battle taking place between Pakistan's military and a resilient cadre of extremists, it seems imperative, from a strategic perspective, that the Pakistani people understand that resisting the Taliban will not lead to such disastrous outcomes.

NISA QAZI

FLAMED: On page 39 of this issue, readers will find an ad from the organization **Facts and Logic About the Middle East** (FLAME), which warns of "the deadly threat of a nuclear-armed Iran" and claims that the only solution is to threaten to destroy Iran's nuclear facilities. This magazine has long held the opposing view; as we editorialized three years ago ("Saber Rattling Over Iran," May 22, 2006), the "continued use of coercive diplomacy to curtail Iran's nuclear program will only strengthen its hard-line regime and solidify Iranian public opinion behind a national goal of obtaining nuclear weapons.… Threatening Iran with sanctions and military attacks strengthens Iranian hard-liners' case for nuclear weapons." Our ad policy (thenation.com/mediakit/policy) starts with the strong presumption against banning advertisers because we disapprove of, or even abhor, their views. We reserve the right, however, to attack them in our editorial pages—a right we exercise here in brief.

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huge popular movement that took up Moussavi's cause. On June 15 close to 800,000 people marched peacefully through the streets of downtown Tehran. The numbers kept swelling for two days, until Khamenei ended the brief Tehran Spring with his ultimatum and a massive show of force.

In the past few weeks, millions of Iranians have voted with their feet, marched peacefully, experienced mass catharsis, fought pitched street battles and defied the government's edicts with increasing confidence. Before the crackdown, they got a taste of freedom and personal empowerment, and they won't soon forget it.

Khamenei's anguished sermon on June 19 was not provoked simply by the popular uprising in the streets. According to a well-placed source in the holy city of Qom, Rafsanjani is working furiously behind the scenes to call for an emergency meeting of the Khobregan, or Assembly of Experts—the elite all-cleric body that can unseat the Supreme Leader or dilute his prerogatives. The juridical case against Khamenei would involve several counts. First, he would be charged with countenancing a coup d'état—albeit a bloodless one—without consulting with the Khobregan. Second, he would stand accused of deceitfully plotting to oust Rafsanjani—who is the Khobregan chairman and nominally the country's third-most-important authority—from his positions of power. Third, he would be said to have threatened the very stability of the republic with his ambition and recklessness.

Rafsanjani's purported plan is to replace Khamenei's one-person dictatorship with a Leadership Council composed of three or more high-ranking clerics; this formula was proposed and then abandoned in 1989 by several prominent clerics. Rafsanjani will likely recommend giving a seat to Khamenei on the council to prevent a violent backlash by his fanatic loyalists. It is not clear if Rafsanjani will have the backing of the two-thirds of the chamber members needed for such a change, though the balance of forces within the Khobregan could be tipped by the events unfolding in the streets. As a symbolic gesture, Rafsanjani is said to favor holding the meeting in Qom—the nation's religious center, which Khamenei has diminished—rather than in Tehran, where it has been held before.

If there is one iconic image that has emerged from the extraordinary recent events, it is that of the masked young men and women who have appeared at all the major flashpoints. The Green Wave—the name chosen by Moussavi for his movement—is a multigenerational, multiethnic and multiclass phenomenon, though with a strong urban, middle-class accent. It is also composed of men and women in roughly equal numbers.

However diffuse the Green Wave, it has a critical component that is the linchpin of the entire movement: a class of young revolutionaries who have sustained it through difficult times. Many of these young men and women are between 18 and 24; they sport green armbands and masks, and they are fearless. Before the Revolutionary Guards stepped into the fray on June 20, the young militants of the Green Wave withstood days of unrelenting attacks by the fanatic Basij militia and the regular riot police.

What powers this new militancy? The Islamic Republic is not a dictatorship in the normal sense of the word. Its practitioners believe they are doing God's work on earth. Guiding the wayward by persuasion and coercion is among their chief tasks. Nearly every young person in Iran, particularly young women, can recount dozens of stories of humiliation and discrimination at the hands of government agents and supporters. For them, each rock thrown at the police, each hand-to-hand combat with the militiamen and vigilantes, each confrontation with the heavily armed Revolutionary Guards is not just an act of political defiance but a cathartic experience of personal liberation.

Unlike their wide-eyed parents with their utopias and romanticization of revolutionary violence, the new young revolutionaries are sophisticated and canny. They have few illusions about the magnitude of the problems facing their country or the complexities of living in a highly traditional and religious society. For example, despite the fact that they are overwhelmingly secular, their slogans mingle political and religious themes to avoid alienating the faithful. Their response to Obama's initially measured rhetoric is another sign of a new political sophistication at work: everyone understands that US meddling would be the proverbial kiss of death to the opposition's cause.

In the days and weeks to come, this infant movement will face difficult challenges. It may suffer some setbacks and reversals, but what matters is the experience it has gained. At this stage, it is doubtful that fear alone can contain the rising tide of discontent or return things to the *status quo ante*. BABAK SARFARAZ

Babak Sarfaraz is a pseudonym for a journalist in Iran.

Calvin Trillin, Deadline Poet

On a Confession of Adultery by Senator John Ensign

He's big in evangelical pursuits—
Pro-family, a star in Promise Keepers.
He now says he had something on the side.
Jeepers!
Creepers!

Bucking the Banks

Capitolism

When I went to the White House on June 17 for the unveiling of the president's new proposal for financial reform, I wasn't expecting to see anyone I knew. But upon entering the regal parlor of the East Wing, reporters were greeted with an odd scene, something like a staged cocktail party with a Marine Band pianist and people in suits milling and kibitzing. I started to pick familiar faces out of the crowd: Robert Kuttner from

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The American Prospect, Elizabeth Warren of the Congressional Oversight Panel, George Goehl of National People's Action and now-legendary Brooksley Born, ex-chair of the Commodity Futures Trading Commission who presciently warned of the dangers of unregulated credit default swaps.

Joining the small community of progressive finance reform advocates were about two dozen legislators from both parties, the chief members of Obama's economic brain trust and a passel of anonymous white men in suits who I later realized were the titans of finance. It was a weird scene. "I was standing next to Larry Summers when he had no one to talk to," one lefty in attendance confided to me, "but I couldn't bring myself to talk to him."

I also spotted Heather Booth. Booth has short-cropped silver hair, an organizer's edgy intensity and a résumé in progressive politics nearly as long as the White House's eighty-eight-page plan for financial reform. She started with the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee forty-six years ago; went on to found the Midwest Academy, which has trained more than 25,000 organizers; and has run campaigns in the labor movement, the feminist movement and the Democratic Party. Her latest project is Americans for Financial Reform, a coalition of nearly 200 groups—ranging from the AFL-CIO to ACORN, Public Citizen, Taxpayers for Common Sense and AARP—that has set itself the Herculean (but desperately needed) task of countering the voices of the Men in Suits during the coming battle over financial regulation. The fact that Booth was in attendance gave me a pinprick of optimism.

The crowd was shuttled into the East Room, where Obama touted his advisers' deliberative process. "These proposals reflect intensive consultation with leaders in Congress," he said, as well as "conversations with regulators…consumer advocates and business leaders, academic experts and the broader public."

That afternoon, the White House sent reporters a complete list of the attendees, and it was an impressively diverse set of stakeholders. The list struck me as an embodiment of everything that is noble and frustrating about Obamaism. In crafting the plan, and staging the event, the White House really does seem to have brought everyone to the table. If you closed the doors of that room and asked those present to hammer out a financial reform policy, the result wouldn't be ideal, but it would be pretty decent.

But no matter how much the White House would will it otherwise, policy isn't created in this fashion. Rather than an ersatz constitutional democracy where every stakeholder gets one vote, it's a lot more like shareholder democracy: the more shares you own, the more votes you get. And the banks have all the shares.

A recent paper by IMF economists showed that between 1998 and 2006 the average FIRE (finance, insurance, real estate) firm increased its lobbying costs by 25 percent, while other industries averaged only a 10 percent increase. Public Citizen recently released a study of public finance records that calculated that Wall Street had spent $5 billion-with-a-*b* in campaign contributions and lobbying over the past decade.

This may seem like par for the course in Washington, but it's far, far worse in financial matters than in almost any other area of domestic policy. On the other major legislative battles—healthcare, climate change, the Employee Free Choice Act—there is an organized, mobilized permanent infrastructure to push lawmakers in a progressive direction. They may be underdogs, but at least it's a fight. Every time the HMOs try to scare people about "socialized medicine," Health Care for America Now and others are there to push back.

This simply isn't the case with financial reform, as has been depressingly clear since the chaotic week in October when TARP was authorized. On one side you have the entire networked overclass of twenty-first-century financial capitalism; on the other… the Center for Responsible Lending. That's only a touch hyperbolic. The CRL does great work, and there are others—the Consumer Federation of America, Public Citizen—who have been toiling alongside it. But this doesn't even rise to the level of being an unfair fight. It's not a fight at all. "Dude, there's just no comparison," one Democratic staffer on the House Financial Services Committee told me. "Just completely outgunned."

Says a staffer for a senator who's been an outspoken critic of the financial industry, "If there's anything that's organized to counteract [Wall Street] influence, I certainly haven't seen it."

Which is where, I hope, Americans for Financial Reform comes in. The idea, Booth says, is to coordinate existing efforts and then amplify them so that it's "not just up to the banks to make a deal in private."

The group just launched in mid-June and so far has only three staffers, including Booth. But they're raising money and project a $5 million budget. Booth says she's been overwhelmed by the enthusiasm and energy people have shown for the project. In a month they've relied on progressive economists and wonks to pull together a policy task force, which has issued a series of white papers sketching out a vision of progressive regulatory reform. They're now developing a communications and grassroots field strategy.

They have their work cut out for them: part of what facilitates Wall Street's power is the sheer complexity of the issues involved. "On the one hand its affects everyone's life; on the other hand it's been the province of elite inside circles, and you think, Well, the experts will take care of it," she says. And yet, "the experts are the ones that got us into this." CHRISTOPHER HAYES

Obama's False Reform

COMMENT

The most disturbing thing about Barack Obama's call for financial reform was the way the president falsified our predicament. He tried to make it sound as though everyone was implicated in the breakdown and therefore no one was really to blame. "A culture of irresponsibility took root, from Wall Street to Washington to Main Street," Obama asserted. "And a regulatory regime basically crafted in the wake of a twentieth-century economic crisis—the Great Depression—was overwhelmed by the speed, scope and sophistication of a twenty-first-century global economy."

That is not what happened, to put it charitably. The regulatory system was not overwhelmed by historic forces; it was systematically gutted and dismantled by the government at the behest of banking interests. If Obama wants details, he can consult his

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economic advisers—including Larry Summers and Tim Geithner—who participated directly in unwinding prudential rules and regulations. Cheers were led by the Federal Reserve, with heavy lifting by both political parties.

If Obama were to tell the truth now about what went wrong, he would face a far larger problem trying to clean up the mess. Instead, he has opted for smooth talk and fuzzy reforms that in effect evade the nasty complexities of our situation. He might get away with this in the short run—Congress doesn't much want to face the music either. But Obama's so-called reform is "kicking the can down the road," as he likes to say about other problems. In the long run, it will haunt the country, because it fails to confront the true nature of the disorders.

Giving more power to the Federal Reserve to be the über-regulator of banking and finance is a terrible idea. Asking the cloistered central bank to resolve all the explosive questions about the overreaching power of financial institutions is like throwing the problem into a black box and closing the lid. That's the reason Wall Street's leading firms first proposed the Fed as super-cop, then sold it to George W. Bush and now Obama. Give the mess to the Wizard of Oz, the guy behind the curtain. This constitutes the high politics of evasion.

Still, a nascent rebellion is gathering strength in Congress. Some 240 House members have endorsed a measure to force auditing of the Fed by the Government Accountability Office—a small but vital step toward dismantling the central bank's privileged secrecy and intimidating mystique.

As someone who has been around this subject for three decades, I have come to understand that the power of financial titans and their friends at the Fed depends crucially on public ignorance. Most legislators are just as clueless as their constituents. If they knew more about how the system works, they would see that most of Obama's reforms are insubstantial gestures, not actual remedies. The president, for instance, proposes to raise the requirements for capital and liquidity held by commercial banks with strict limits on leverage. That is a virtuous proposal, but it leaves unanswered the question, Why did the legal limits already in place fail to restrain bankers' appetites? Indeed, several times in the past two decades the Fed and other central banks enacted new and supposedly more effective capital requirements. The big dogs of banking broke free of the leash again and again, while vigilant watchdogs at the Fed and elsewhere looked the other way. Why should we expect different results next time?

One reason the old restraints failed is the "modernization" that shifted credit functions outside regulated banks and into a variety of unregulated money pots—the so-called shadow banking system of hedge funds and private-equity firms. These interact intimately with traditional banks and give them profitable ways to evade rules or conceal the condition of balance sheets from regulators and investors. These interactions are dazzlingly complex, but this was not an accident. It was the goal of financial deregulation enacted by Bill Clinton, arm in arm with the GOP Congress.

Summers and Geithner suggest that shadowy outfits like GE Capital or major insurance companies can be regulated by the Fed as "Tier 1 Financial Holding Companies." As Joe Nocera recently noted in the *New York Times*, "Tier 1" sounds like the new name for "too big to fail." The Fed will watch them (we are assured) to prevent "systemic risk." But that is what the Fed should be doing already as the lender of last resort charged with defending the "safety and soundness" of the banking system. The Securities and Exchange Commission, likewise, is supposed to monitor hedge funds and private-equity firms, which thrive on secrecy. Since the SEC failed miserably to police regular corporations, this does not sound reassuring.

Another example of extremely wishful thinking is the proposed rule on securitization of mortgages. The method of bundling home mortgages and turning them into salable bonds was supposed to reduce risk; it did the opposite. The mortgage lenders were able to execute dubious, even fraudulent, loans, collect profits upfront and then sell the package to unwitting investors. Obama's answer is to require the originating lender to retain a 5 percent interest in the mortgage and pass on the rest. That seems ludicrous and innocent of how that cutthroat world works. The financial geniuses who created the subprime scandal could hide 5 percent of the mortgage value with a couple of keystrokes—adding fees, closing costs or other dodges. To really hold lenders responsible, they should be made to hold on to something like 50 percent of liability for the original loan, with perhaps the other 50 percent assigned to whatever bank or investment house packages the mortgage security and sells it to financial markets. That would be "responsibility" with old-fashioned force.

The one bright spot in Obama's plan is the new regulatory agency he recommends to protect consumers of financial products. This was inspired by Elizabeth Warren, the Harvard professor who has been a brave and brilliant critic of the credit card industry and other forms of predatory rip-offs. While it depends entirely on the details, this innovative agency could become the new tiger among tired, toothless regulators—especially if Obama has the courage to name Warren as the inaugural chair. The bankers hate this idea and will fight to kill it. They know this regulator will not be captive to them, at least not yet.

The essence of what's missing in the Obama plan is hard rules. Drawing up concrete prohibitions and commandments is obviously a tougher challenge, because it requires deep understanding of the financial system. You cannot design far-reaching reforms until you understand what led to the breakdown. Since the government has avoided that kind of serious examination, it assigns these explosive issues over to expert regulators—the same experts who failed to see the trouble coming.

Right now, the imperative should be to slow down the rush to weak solutions. Congress would do well to drag its feet while it conducts deeper investigations. A promising new commission has been authorized to investigate the crisis, along the lines of the one run by Ferdinand Pecora in the 1930s, which investigated the causes of the 1929 crash. Let's hope it is not stocked with bank lobbyists. Meanwhile, give subpoena power to Elizabeth Warren and the Congressional Oversight Panel she chairs. Hire some independent investigative reporters eager to dig deeper into the mulch. What exactly went wrong? Who has bloody hands? What fundamental reforms are needed? If the economy returns to "normal" soon, the ardor for serious reform might dissipate. That is a small risk to take, especially if the alternative is enacting the bankers' pallid version of reform.

WILLIAM GREIDER

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Alexander Cockburn

Twittergasms

How much easier it is to raise three—or 3 million—rousing tweets for the demonstrators in Tehran than to mount any sort of political resistance at home! Here we have a new Democratic president, propelled into office on a magic carpet of progressive pledges, now methodically flouting them one by one, with scarcely a twit or even a tweet raised in protest, aside from the gallant efforts of Medea Benjamin, Russell Mokhiber and their comrades at the healthcare hearings in Congress.

At the end of June US troops will leave Iraq's cities, and many of them will promptly clamber onto military transports and redeploy to Obama's war in Afghanistan and Pakistan. There's been no hiccup in this smooth transition from the disastrous invasion of Iraq to Obama's escalation farther east. The Twittering classes are mostly giving Obama a pass on this one or actively supporting it. Where are the mobilizations, actions, civil disobedience? Antiwar coalitions like United for Peace and Justice and Win Without War (with MoveOn also belatedly adopting this craven posture) don't say clearly "US troops out now!" They whine about the "absence of a clear mission" (Win Without War), plead futilely for "an exit strategy" (UFPJ). One letter from the UFPJ coalition (which includes Code Pink) to the Congressional Progressive Caucus in May laconically began a sentence with the astounding words, "To defeat the Taliban and stabilize the country, the U.S. must enable the Afghan people…" These pathetic attempts not to lose "credibility" and thus attain political purchase have met with utter failure, as the recent vote on a supplemental appropriation proved. A realistic estimate seems to be that among the Democrats in Congress there are fewer than forty solid antiwar votes.

Not so long ago Sri Lankan government troops launched a final savage onslaught on the remaining Tamil enclaves. In the discriminate butchery of Tamils, whether civilians or fighters, estimates of the dead prepared by the United Nations ran at 20,000 (the report was suppressed by the current appalling UN secretary general, Ban Ki-moon). I don't recall too many tweets in Washington or across this nation about a methodical exercise in carnage. But then, unlike those attractive Iranians, Tamils tend to be small and dark and not beautiful in the contour of poor Neda, who got out of her car at the wrong time in the wrong place, died in view of a cellphone and is now reborn on CNN as the Angel of Iran.

The list of Obama's sellouts is already far, far beyond the capacity of a tweetgram, which is probably why we don't hear about them from the Twittering classes. Start with healthcare. Next, how much has Obama committed to financial rescue, telling the waiter that the American middle class will foot the bill for decades to come? ($12.8 trillion at last report.)

Obama recently came up with his master plan for regulating Wall Street to prevent the chicaneries of boom-boom time that brought the world's economy to its knees. It will now pass from a president bought and paid for by Wall Street to the Senate Finance Committee, also bought and paid for by Wall Street, which won't even have to gut it because it's gutless already.

Unemployment is climbing. Call it, at the current rate, 1,000 per hour losing their jobs. Desperate thousands are surging back onto the welfare rolls, pruned brutally by Bill Clinton just over a decade ago, all of this presided over by the Hopeful President, who has blown the best chance in seventy years to take an effective swipe at the looting classes and try to get more money into the pockets of the working poor.

We can pass on to Obama's ghastly betrayals of all pledges to diminish government secrecy, improve "transparency," undo the unconstitutional rampages of Bush and Cheney's jackboot state. Even the modest twitter of a hope that medical marijuana might fare better in Obama-time has now been extinguished by the Justice Department.

It's darkness at noon, and Obama sails on with scarcely an insulting tweet hurled from liberal lips. Meanwhile the Twitterers hail as an apostle of liberal reform none other than Moussavi, who was Iran's prime minister from 1981 to '89 and one of the foulest of that foul gang in the Council of the Cultural Revolution, charged with the Islamization of Iranian society. It was Moussavi who sent murdering squads of thugs into every university, purging secularism and religious minorities. This was in the early '80s, when batches of hundreds of accused "leftists," many of them scarcely in their teens, were hanged from cranes in Tehran in a single day. And behind Moussavi is the billionaire Rafsanjani. Compared with this vicious duo, Ahmadinejad is relatively wholesome and, I'd reckon on the analyses and numbers I've read so far (see, for example, Esam Al-Amin's recent piece on the CounterPunch site), the actual winner in the election.

And who's doing the Twittering? Professor Larry Gross, director of the School of Communication at the University of Southern California, Annenberg, has forwarded from chartingstocks.net a very interesting analysis of the most prolific Twitterers, "a team of people with an interest in destabilizing Iran." The chartingstocks.net analysis narrowed the spammers down to three of the most persistent: "StopAhmadi," "IranRiggedElect" and "Change_For_Iran." "These twitting spammers began crying foul before the final votes were even counted, just as Mousavi had. The spammer @IranRiggedElect created his profile before a winner was announced and performed the public service of informing us in the United States, in English and every 10 minutes, of the unfair election. He did so unselfishly, and without any regard for his fellow friends and citizens of Iran, who don't speak English and don't use Twitter." ■

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Katha Pollitt

Muslim Women's Rights, Continued

I thought President Obama's Cairo speech was basically fine: begin anew, extend the hand, reject "crude stereotypes" all around, turn the page on the Christian triumphalism of the Bush years. But there's no denying that the section on women's rights was rather minimal, just three paragraphs, compared with his long discourse on Israel and Palestine; and to my American ears its priorities were a bit odd. You would think the biggest issue for Muslim women is that someone is preventing them from wearing a headscarf: "The US government has gone to court to protect the right of women and girls to wear the hijab and to punish those who would deny it," he said. "I reject the view of some in the West that a woman who chooses to cover her hair is somehow less equal." Fair enough, but that woman is choosing. What about Saudi or Iranian women, who are forced by law to cover? Obama noted that countries where women are well educated tend to be more prosperous and promised American aid for women's literacy and microloans. These are both good things, especially in desperately poor and underdeveloped countries like Afghanistan; but face it, to become full participants in modern societies women need more than a grade school education and a sewing machine. They need their rights. In fact, some Muslim countries, like Iran, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states, already have large numbers of highly educated women—in Iran, as in America, more young women go to college than men. But those women are prevented from working to their capacity, or even at all, by religiously motivated sex discrimination. In Saudi Arabia, women can't even work in lingerie stores. By a quirk of the gender-apartheid regulations, only men can sell ladies' underwear. So much for "modesty": when there's money to be made from women, you can be sure the theocrats will figure out a reason that God wants it to go into men's pockets.

I can see why Obama didn't issue a ringing call for full civil rights for Muslim women: an end to stoning and lashings and female genital mutilation, to forced marriage and child marriage, to family law that enshrines male privilege, the valuing of women's testimony in court as half that of a man's and the scandalous laws that punish as unchaste those rape victims who lack four witnesses—male witnesses, of course—to the crime. Such a statement would have backfired; it would have allowed traditionalists and theocrats to pose as anti-imperialists, defenders of culture and religion against the impious West. Moreover, as he properly noted, women struggle for their rights all over the world, not just under Islam. But I can also see why some feminists were disappointed not to get more of a shout-out. "It seems that Mr. Obama is attempting to build political bridges by taking a more socially conservative stance, a common—but mistaken—tack in the struggle against fundamentalism and terrorism," writes Algerian-American human rights lawyer Karima Bennoune on the blog Europe: Solidaire Sans Frontières. "This may also be the reason that the President felt compelled to stress his respect for 'women who choose to live their lives in traditional roles,' rather than, say, referencing the critical struggles of the Egyptian women's movement. Welcome to the new cultural relativism. We're not going to deal with human rights problems in your part of the world, because we want your extremists to stop blowing us up."

The title of Bennoune's article, "The Religionizing of Politics," points to another problem: the tendency in the West to treat majority-Muslim countries as a single cohesive entity—"the Muslim world"—rather than as Asian, African and Middle Eastern nations that are as different from one another as the majority-Christian lands of Britain and Mexico. The term itself promotes the view that Islam *tout court* is what these countries are all about, thus marginalizing other ways of understanding them and rendering invisible the non-Muslims and seculars who live there.

The current election struggle in Iran came as a big surprise to those who take the simplistic view of Muslim nations as our antagonists in a clash of civilizations. Who knew that our arch-enemy, member in good standing of the Axis of Evil, had all these hip young people, these tech-savvy Tweeters, these ordinary citizens eager to go into the streets day after day and risk beatings, arrests and death at the hands of the feared Basij? Who knew it had so many women who, however devout they may or may not be, don't want to be denied ordinary human freedoms in the name of religion, thank you very much? The energetic and massive participation of women in the street demonstrations has received much comment in the Western media, but it's only surprising if you think Muslim women really are as weak and passive as the mullahs imagine.

That impression of Muslim women appears to be shared by Nicolas Sarkozy, who has thrown his support behind a proposal to ban in France the all-enveloping burqa and the niqab, calling it a "question of women's liberty and dignity." The most vocal French feminists support the ban, as does the French Muslim women's group Ni Putes Ni Soumises (Neither Whores nor Doormats), for whom it's a necessary counterweight to family and community pressures on women. While it may well be true that some of the small number of French women who wear burqas and niqabs are forced into them, it's hard to see how a ban will help liberate them. Instead, it will permit the French to publicly humiliate them and feel good about it, ratify the Islamists' claim that the West is out to get Islam and give more proof that Muslims are unwelcome in France.

* * *

Just so you know, *The Mind-Body Problem*, my new collection of poems, is now out from Random House. ■

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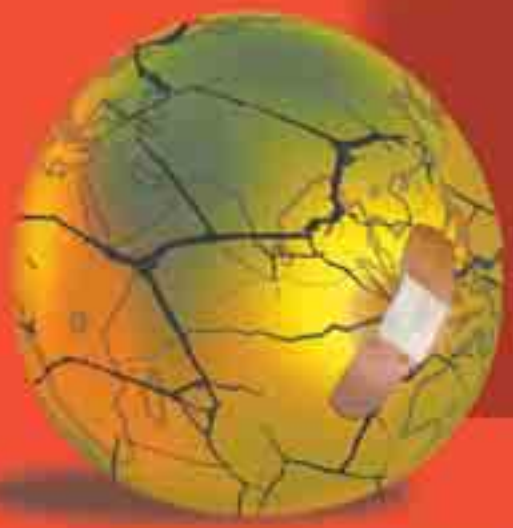
A REAL CURE FOR THE GLOBAL ECONOMIC CRACKUP



JOSEPH E. STIGLITZ

It's time to restructure the world's economy to ensure a more stable, more shared prosperity.

This is not only the worst global economic downturn of the post–World War II era; it is the first serious global downturn of the modern era of globalization. America's financial markets failed to do what they should have done—manage risk and allocate capital well—and these failures have had a major impact all over the world. Globalization, too, did not work the way it was supposed to. It helped spread the consequences of the failures of US financial markets around the world. September 11, 2001, taught us that with globalization not only do good things travel more easily across borders; bad things do too. September 15, 2008, has reinforced that lesson.

A global downturn requires a global response. But so far our responses—to stimulate and regulate the global economy—have largely been framed at the national level and often take insufficient account of the effect on others. The result is that there is less coordination than there should be, as well as a smaller and less well-designed stimulus than is optimal. A poorly designed and insufficient stimulus means that the downturn will last longer, the recovery will be slower and there will be more innocent victims. Among these victims are the many developing countries—including those that have had far better regulatory and macroeconomic policies than the United States and some European countries. In the United States a financial crisis transformed itself into an economic crisis; in many developing countries the economic downturn is creating a financial crisis.

The world has two choices: either we move to a better global regulatory system, or we lose some of the important benefits that have resulted from globalization. But continuing the status quo management of globalization is no longer tenable; too many countries have had to pay too high a price. The G-20's response to the global economic crisis, crafted at meetings in November in Washington and in April in London, was a beginning—but just a beginning. It did not do enough to address the short-term problems nor did it put in place the long-term restructuring necessary to prevent another crisis.

A United Nations meeting in late June hopes to continue the global discussion begun at earlier G-20 meetings and to extend this discussion to what went wrong in the first place so that we can do a better job of preventing another crisis. The global politics of this meeting are complex. Many of the 173 countries that are not members of the G-20 argue that decisions affecting the lives of their citizens should not be made by a self-selected club that lacks political legitimacy. Some members of the G-20—including new members brought into the discussion for the first time as the G-8 expanded to the G-20—like things the way they are; they like being in the inner circle and argue that enlarging it will only complicate matters. Many from the advanced industrial countries would like to avoid overly harsh criticism of their banks, which played a pivotal role in the crisis, or of the international economic institutions that not only failed to prevent the crisis but pushed the deregulatory policies that contributed so much to it and its rapid spread around the world. Indeed, the G-20's response to the crisis in developing countries relied centrally on the IMF.

I chair the UN Commission of Experts, which was given the task by the General Assembly of preparing an interim report before the June meeting. This report will, I hope, have some influence on the discussions. It is too soon to tell whether it will, or if anything concrete will come from the meeting. The international community should realize, however, that much more needs to be done than has so far been undertaken by the G-20.

Our preliminary report lists ten policies that need to be implemented immediately. These include strong stimulus efforts

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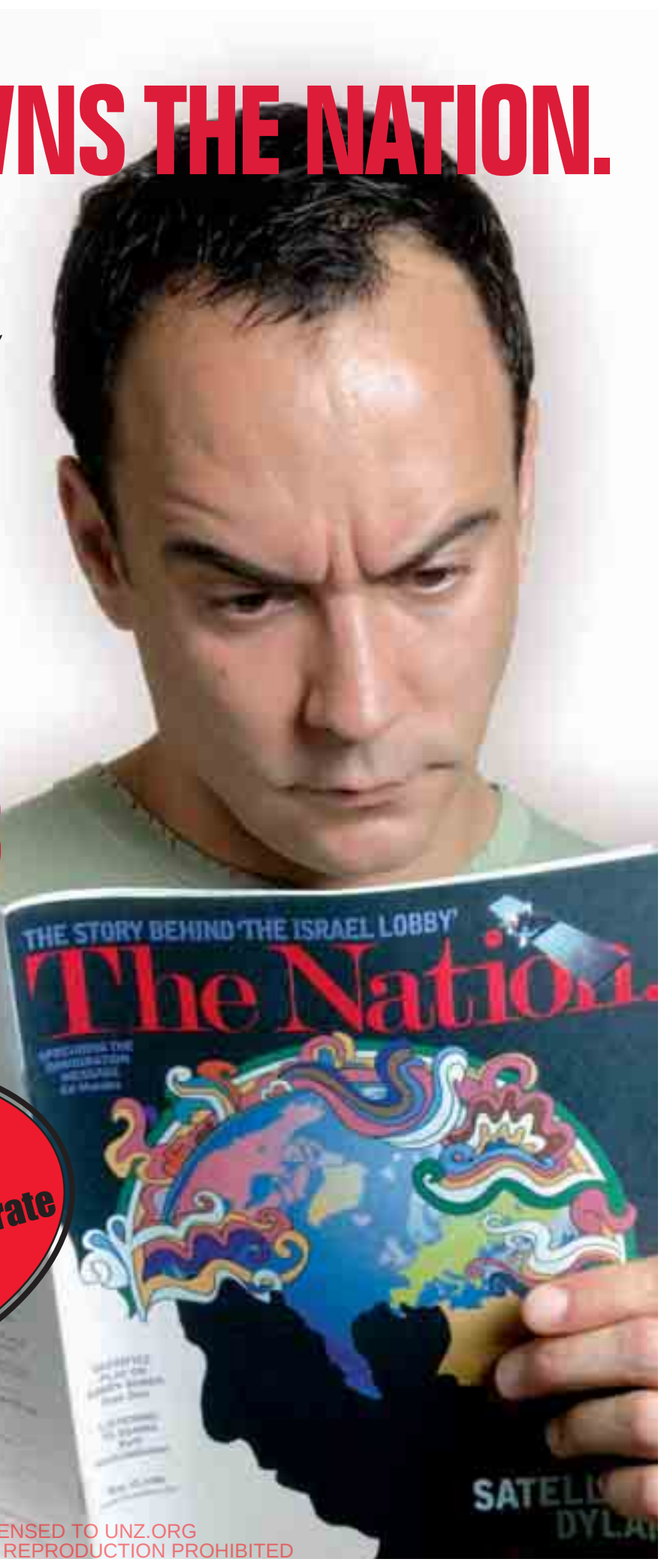

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from developed countries, providing additional funding for developing countries, creating more policy space for developing countries, avoiding protectionism, opening advanced countries' markets to the least developed countries' exports and improving coordination of global economic policies. In addition, the commission recommends ten deeper reforms to the global financial system on which work needs to begin.

The United States may have the resources to bail out its banks and stimulate its economy, but developing countries do not. Developing countries have been important engines for economic growth in recent years, and it is hard to see a robust global recovery in which they do not play an important role. There is a consensus that all countries should provide strong stimulus packages, but many of the poorer developing countries don't have the resources to do so. Many in the developed world are worried about the debt burdens resulting from stimulus packages, but for those still scarred by debt crises, taking on additional debt may involve an unacceptable burden. Assistance has to be provided in grants, not just loans.

In the past, the IMF provided assistance accompanied by "conditions." In many cases it demanded that countries raise interest rates to high (sometimes very, very high) levels and reduce deficits by cutting expenditures and/or raising taxes—just the opposite of US and European policies. This led to a weakening of national economies, when the point of IMF assistance was to strengthen them. Although those providing assistance want to be sure their money is used well, these kinds of conditions are counterproductive and make many developing countries reluctant to accept help. A condition imposed on international institutions that provide assistance to developing countries should be that they not engage in such "conditionality."

To help fund the large amount of assistance required, developed countries should set aside 1 percent of their stimulus package to help developing countries. The funds have to be distributed through a variety of channels, including regional institutions and possibly a newly created credit facility whose governance better reflects new potential donors (Asian and Middle East countries) and recipients.

The G-20 did make significant efforts to expand the IMF's lending capacity—partly, some suspect, because of the role the IMF may play in rescuing Eastern Europe rather than because of its desire to help the least developed countries. One clever way of doing so was a new issue of IMF money (to the tune of $250 billion) called "special drawing rights," a positive move, but too little of it will wind up in the hands of the poorest countries.

Although the G-20 made grand statements at its November meeting about avoiding protectionism, the World Bank notes that since then seventeen members have undertaken protectionist measures. Developing countries have to be protected from protectionism and its consequences, especially when it discriminates against them. The United States, for example, included a "buy American" provision in its stimulus bill, but many advanced industrial countries are exempt from this provision due to a WTO government procurement agreement. This means that America, in effect, discriminates against poor countries.

We know that subsidies distort free and fair trade as much as tariffs, but subsidies are even worse than tariffs, because developing countries can ill afford them. The massive bailouts and guarantees provided by the United States and other wealthy countries give their firms an unfair competitive advantage. It is one thing for firms from poor countries to compete against well-capitalized US firms; it is another to compete against Washington. Such subsidies, bailouts and guarantees are understandable, but the adverse impacts on developing countries must be recognized, and we must find some way of compensating them to offset this unfair advantage.

Although the G-20 made grand statements about avoiding protectionism, seventeen members have undertaken protectionist measures.

International cooperation is also required if we are to devise an effective regulatory regime. There is international agreement on ten issues. First, the crisis was caused by excesses of deregulation and deficiencies in the enforcement of existing regulations. Second, self-regulation will not suffice. Third, regulation is required because failures in a large financial institution or the financial system more generally can have "externalities," adverse effects on workers, homeowners, taxpayers and others worldwide. Fourth, more than transparency is required—even full disclosure of the complex derivatives and other financial products might not have allowed for an adequate risk assessment. Fifth, perverse incentives that encouraged excessive risk-taking and shortsighted behavior contributed to bad banking practices. Sixth, deficiencies in corporate governance contributed to flawed incentive structures. Seventh, so too did the fact that many banks had grown "too big to fail"—which meant that if they gambled and won, they walked away with the gains, but if they lost, taxpayers picked up the losses.

Eighth, unless regulation is comprehensive there can be a "race to the bottom," with countries with lax regulation competing to attract financial services. Ninth, if that race happens, countries will have to take action to protect their economies—they cannot allow bad practices elsewhere to harm their citizens. And tenth, regulation has to be comprehensive across financial institutions. As we have seen, if we regulate the banking system but not the shadow banking system, business will migrate to where it is less well regulated and less transparent.

Despite this broad consensus, the G-20 said little or nothing about some key issues: what to do with banks that have grown not only too big to fail but (according to the Obama administration) too big to be financially restructured? The G-20 failed to

Joseph E. Stiglitz, University Professor at Columbia University, received the Nobel Prize in Economics in 2001 for research on the economics of information.

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ask the hard questions: if these big banks' shareholders and bondholders are insulated from the risk of default, how can there be market discipline? What will replace that discipline? The G-20 has talked about the rapid return of "private capital," but what does this bode if private capital returns without market discipline? There was also talk of continuing to allow over-the-counter derivatives-trading with no transparency. But without transparency of each trade—to assess the nature of the counterparty risk—how can there be market discipline?

The G-20 did take long-overdue action on nontransparent offshore banking centers. The large amount of banking in these centers is not a result of these countries' comparative advantage in providing banking services. It is because they avoid and evade taxes and regulations. But these problems, while important, played little if any role in the current crisis. Why was so much effort spent on these extraneous issues rather than on those more directly related to the crisis?

From the perspective of the developing countries, though, not enough was done about bank secrecy in offshore as well as onshore centers. Developing nations are often criticized for corruption, but secret bank accounts wherever they may be facilitate corruption, providing safe haven for stolen funds. Developing countries want this money returned and want access to information that will allow them to detect secret accounts.

We need better systems of global economic governance, moving away from ad hoc arrangements toward more inclusive institutions.

Financial and capital market liberalization—as well as banking deregulation—contributed to the crisis and to the spread of the crisis from the United States to developing countries. Advanced industrial nations are reluctant to admit that these policies, which they pushed so hard on developing countries, are part of the problem. No wonder, then, that the G-20 did not argue for a reconsideration of these longstanding policies.

The global economic crisis highlights the deficiencies of existing international institutions. As I noted, the IMF and the Financial Stability Forum—created in the aftermath of the last global financial crisis, in 1997–98—did not prevent the crisis. In some cases they pushed policies that are now recognized as root causes. Although some of the proposals are moves in the right direction, others (such as changing the name of the Financial Stability Forum to the Financial Stability Board) are unlikely to have much effect, and as a package they are unlikely to suffice.

If we are to make our global economic system work better, we have to have better systems of global economic governance. It is important to move from ad hoc arrangements to more inclusive and representative institutional frameworks. We need a global economic coordinating council within the UN, not only to coordinate economic policies (e.g., the size of the stimulus and regulatory structures) but also to identify and rectify gaps in the global economic institutional structure. For instance, this crisis will almost surely be marked by some sovereign debt defaults. Despite extensive discussions at the time of Argentina's 2001 default, there was no progress in creating a sovereign debt-restructuring mechanism. The IMF—dominated by the creditor countries—cannot play a central role in designing such a mechanism (any more than we in the United States should turn to our banks to design a good bankruptcy law).

One of the alleged reasons for not "playing by the rules" and forcing troubled international banks to go through financial restructuring (instead, bailing them out) was that it would give rise to huge cross-border complications. Citibank, for example, operates worldwide, and depositors in many countries are not insured. What responsibility do US taxpayers have to depositors abroad if Citibank fails? They didn't pay deposit insurance; there is no contract committing us to pick up the pieces. Yet some claim it would do irreparable harm to America's image if we took no responsibility. Iceland's banking problems illustrate the potential seriousness of these cross-border problems. Its citizens' standard of living may be impaired for decades because of the bankruptcies of its banks and the Icelandic government's decision to assume some responsibility for these failures. And yet, again, nothing is being done to address these problems.

Most important, the UN commission calls attention to the need for reform in the dollar-based global reserve system; it advocates the creation of a global reserve system. Not only is the current system fraying; it contributes to an insufficiency of global aggregate demand and to global instability. Every year developing countries set aside hundreds of billions of dollars to protect themselves against the costs of such instability, made so evident by the East Asia crisis. The commission has argued persuasively that this problem must be addressed if we are to have a robust global recovery. Recent statements from the BRIC nations (Brazil, Russia, India and China), expressing their concerns about the dollar reserve system, have added immediacy to the commission's recommendation. This is an old idea—Keynes argued strongly for the creation of a global reserve currency more than sixty years ago—whose time has come.

Those who would like us to go back to the world as it was before the crisis will find some of the questions being asked at the UN summit uncomfortable. They would be happier with a few harsh words for the offshore islands, a few cosmetic reforms to banking regulation, a few lectures about hedge funds (which, like offshore banking centers, were not at the center of this crisis), a new name and a couple of new members for the Financial Stability Forum—and then for us to move on. Many developing countries will be less content to accept these "reforms" as going to the heart of the matter.

As developed countries struggle to ensure a quick recovery, they need to think of the effects of their actions on developing countries. It is time to begin the restructuring of our global economic and financial system in ways that ensure that the fruits of prosperity are more widely shared and that the system is more stable. This task will not be accomplished overnight. But it is a task that must be begun, now. ■

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What's Right With Utah

In the reddest state in the country, Salt Lake City's queers are making big love.

by LISA DUGGAN

Salt Lake City

Forget everything you think you know about Utah. Yes, it's the reddest state in the union and the headquarters of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS). For the past twenty-five years, Republicans have had a virtual lock on statewide offices. Utah hasn't voted for a Democrat for president since 1964, and last year the state chose John McCain over Barack Obama by almost a 2-to-1 margin.

But here in Salt Lake City, it's a different story. The city and surrounding counties are a lovely blue. The current and previous mayors—Ralph Becker and Rocky Anderson—are well-known progressive Democrats with excellent records on the environment, gay and civil rights, disability access and other municipal issues, and Salt Lake County, home to four of the five most populous cities in the state, went for Obama in 2008.

Then there's Salt Lake City's queer community, whose smart, creative and coalition-building strategies could provide a model for gay activists across the country.

That last claim requires a bit of explanation. Last fall I lived in Salt Lake City. As a leftist and New York City dyke, I had expected to find a conservative city and a quietly assimilationist gay community. Instead, I was repeatedly blown away by the progressive politics and outright queerness of the capital city, which is about 40 percent Mormon.

I was in Salt Lake City in November when the passage of California's Proposition 8 generated national outrage against the Mormon Church for its role in sending money and volunteers to help antigay forces take away the right of California's same-sex couples to marry. A few national LGBT figures, most notably gay pundit Dan Savage, called for a boycott of Utah to punish its majority Mormon population. In Salt Lake City, I joined a furious crowd, including many gay Mormons and ex-Mormons, at a November 7 protest at the LDS Temple. The scene was a jumble of mixed messages, with signs ranging from Love Makes a Family, to Separate Church and State, to Brigham Young Had 55 Wives, I Want 1! But no one I saw advocated a boycott. Most seemed to agree with KRCL-FM public radio station personality Troy Williams, referred to by some Utahns as their homegrown Harvey Milk, who challenged Savage on his hourlong program, calling for an influx of queer migrants to the state rather than a boycott. Perhaps a New Queer Pioneer movement, modeled on the sanctified Mormon pioneers of the nineteenth century, would do more to shrink the impact of LDS antigay bigotry than any boycott ever could.

Not that Utah needs new queer residents to spark political, social or cultural creativity. The city is home to a floridly queer and unusually politically unified LGBT community. Salt Lake City hosts numerous gay bars and businesses, a busy assortment of queer artists and intellectuals, a thriving drag culture and an "extreme" BD/SM school. At this year's pride rally, after the annual dyke march on June 6, the city's residents flocked to the downtown Federal Building to hear local drag celebrity Sister Dottie S. Dixon (Mormon mother of a gay son, as embodied by actor Charles Frost) beseech "the almightly diva S&M Goddess of her Most High," among other deities, to "help our surgeons ta discover how to perfarm a complete brain transplant, so that Mitt Romney can live with hope fer a better future." And "while yer at it," Sister Dixon implored, "if you've got any more of them plagues of locus—please send them ta every household that voted fer Preperation 8!"

DAVID DANIELS

Utah gays protest Proposition 8 in Salt Lake City's Temple Square.

The rally was sponsored by the rapidly expanding Utah Pride Center, which under executive director Valerie Larabee has more than doubled its budget in the past five years. At the Pride Center, a broad range of local activist groups and LGBT individuals actually talk to each other—in stark contrast to the balkanized landscape of national LGBT organizations. Indeed, perhaps more than in any other city, Salt Lake City's queer scene resembles the storied days of ACT UP, when mainstream assimilationists collaborated with radical activists to develop talking points, coordinate strategy and change homophobic policy.

This conversation across boundaries is a product of savvy activists and, paradoxically, of the formidable political and cul-

Lisa Duggan, professor of social and cultural analysis at New York University, is the author, most recently, of The Twilight of Equality: Neoliberalism, Cultural Politics and the Attack on Democracy.

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tural barriers created by the Mormon Church and the statewide strength of the Republican machine. In such a political arena, queer flamboyance and tough-minded seriousness have to coexist in order to get anything done. In that sense, as gay activists nationwide take stock of where the gay rights movement has come in the forty years since the Stonewall riots and plot a political future, they should look to Salt Lake City for pointers instead of Boston or New York.

For better or worse, national LGBT politics is now focused on marriage equality. This spring, gay marriage advocates were emboldened by the legalization of same-sex marriage in Iowa, Vermont, New Hampshire and Maine, which joined Massachusetts and Connecticut in the gay marriage column. New York is poised to become the seventh state on that list, and there are a few other states—New Jersey, Rhode Island, Washington and Oregon—where activists can reasonably expect to pick up another marriage win in the future.

But then they hit a daunting wall: forty states define marriage as being between a man and a woman; and twenty-nine of those, including Utah, have that definition embedded in their constitution, putting such restrictions beyond the jurisdiction of state courts. Absent a Supreme Court decision or Congressional same-sex-marriage legislation, individual state-by-state campaigns to repeal these amendments and pass pro-gay bills remain the best avenue to secure partnership rights for same-sex couples in these states. (The legal odd couple, David Boies and Theodore Olsen, opponents in *Bush v. Gore*, have filed a federal lawsuit challenging Prop 8 and seeking to legalize gay marriage nationwide, but most gay legal experts consider it a long shot.) Unfortunately, very little national attention or political talent has been devoted to these states, where the vast majority of Americans live.

A majority of Utah voters—including Governor Huntsman—backed the core of the Common Ground Initiative's gay rights agenda.

Utah suffers with a so-called Super DOMA (Defense of Marriage Act), passed in 2004 by 66 percent of voters as Amendment 3 to the state Constitution. Amendment 3 goes beyond barring same-sex marriage to bar any "marriage like" legal relationship between same-sex couples. Domestic partnerships offering broad benefits, like those in California, as well as civil unions are off the table, along with marriage, at all levels of government in the state.

You might think that such draconian restrictions would hobble LGBT legislative action in states saddled with constitutional bans that cannot be overturned except by another amendment, especially in those eighteen states with a Super DOMA. But not in Utah! In the wake of the Prop 8 protests last fall, an energized LGBT policy organization, Equality Utah, formulated an ingenious strategy. Drawing on the claims of LDS officials and some conservative state politicians that their support of "traditional" marriage isn't antigay, and their assurances that they support other basic protections for LGBT citizens, Equality Utah drew up a list of just such protections. University of Utah law professor Cliff Rosky, a member of Equality Utah's legal panel, branded it the Common Ground Initiative (CGI).

Equality Utah then invited supporters of Prop 8 to demonstrate their lack of antigay rancor by supporting six legislative initiatives on the CGI platform: healthcare rights, fair workplace rights, fair housing rights, inheritance rights, domestic partnerships and clarification of Amendment 3 (removal of the "Super" part of the DOMA). Equality Utah activists also launched a mass public relations campaign to build the Common Ground identity, and now Common Ground buttons, stickers and signs can be seen all over Salt Lake City, gracing shirts, cars, homes, businesses and lawns.

Polling by the *Salt Lake Tribune* and Equality Utah showed majority support for the core CGI issues not only in Salt Lake City and County but statewide. In an early January Equality Utah poll, 62 percent of voters supported employment nondiscrimination laws, 56 percent supported fair housing laws and 73 percent supported granting adult designees of state employees health insurance coverage. The *Tribune* poll also found that 56 percent backed legal protections like inheritance rights and job protection for LGBT people.

The CGI also won the backing of wildly popular Republican Governor Jon Huntsman, who on February 9 surprised the national press by calling for civil unions for same-sex couples and endorsing CGI's first package of legislation. Huntsman had endorsed Amendment 3 when he ran for office in 2004, but his recent change of mind and support for civil unions is out in front of Utah public opinion, which still opposes civil unions by 70 percent. Many pundits surmise that Huntsman's switch is aimed at courting a national public as he prepares to run for president (from his likely perch as ambassador to China). But Huntsman didn't change his position in a political vacuum in Utah. Clearly established public support for most of the CGI issues, disarticulated from the national drive for marriage equality, makes Huntsman's call for civil unions politically viable. The soon-to-be-former governor retains an 84 percent approval rating in his home state.

But despite this outpouring of support and despite dogged work by Equality Utah executive director Mike Thompson (since moved to San Francisco) and staffers Will Carlson, Lauren Littlefield and Keri Jones, who mobilized an army of volunteers energized by the passage of Prop 8, the first three bills to come out of the Common Ground Initiative failed in committee during the 2009 legislative session. A coordinated cadre of antigay legislators schemed to undercut the three bills—covering wrongful death, eliminating housing and employment discrimination and establishing an "Adult Joint Support Declaration" registry—before they could come to a vote on the floor of the Legislature.

The brilliance of the CGI strategy, however, does not lie in the likelihood of immediate or enthusiastic endorsements from conservative opponents in the Legislature or the Mormon

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Church. Rather, the brilliance of the strategy is its ability to refocus public opinion, put conservative opponents on the defensive, shift public perception of the barriers to LGBT equality and broaden the scope of action to include the needs of people living in nonconjugal households, be they straight, gay or other.

Utah's activists are looking beyond marriage equality in a variety of other ways. Sometimes forced by Amendment 3 to ask for less than marriage would provide, they are also pushing ahead to ask for more. Challenged in public venues by conservative claims that CGI is just a step toward marriage equality, Equality Utah organizers repeatedly stress a simple but often overlooked fact: many basic rights and protections for LGBT citizens, including some on the CGI list, are not guaranteed by marriage. Housing and employment discrimination, for example, could continue against married or cohabiting couples as well as single people. That point is very well taken in the current political climate, when marriage equality often stands in for all civil equality.

The CGI legislative initiatives also include provisions that allocate benefits to Utahns living in nonconjugal households, those whose primary "next of kin" and interdependent relations are not with romantic or sexual partners—elderly caretaker households or close friends who live together and share finances, for example. Building on the existing provision in Salt Lake City that grants health insurance benefits to the "adult designees" of city employees, one of the CGI proposals would create an Adult Joint Support Declaration. Such declarations would provide a legal mechanism for adults who take responsibility for each other to have hospital visitation, medical decision-making and inheritance rights. Though designed to get around Amendment 3, which bars recognition of "marriage like" relationships, including domestic partnerships, the Adult Joint Support Declaration bill would actually extend rights to a far broader range of households than marriage or even domestic partnerships do.

Equality Utah organizers stress a simple but often overlooked fact: many basic rights for LGBT citizens are not guaranteed by marriage.

Such proposals begin to make the diversity of households and interdependent relationships visible and highlight the limits of a marriage-focused gay rights agenda that prioritizes the needs of the conventionally coupled. Such provisions could also make coalition-building easier: get the AARP on board to lobby for medical next of kin, tax and inheritance rights for "Golden Girls" households, or attract libertarians who want to take the state out of the business of "recognizing" sexual or romantic relationships entirely.

Activists took on the conservative opposition in some new ways as well. During the 2009 legislative session, notoriously Neanderthal Republican state legislator Chris Buttars was recorded making another in a long series of offensive antigay remarks:

> They're probably the greatest threat to America goin' down I know of. Homosexuality will always be a sexual perversion, but you say that around here now and everybody goes nuts. But I don't care. What is the morals of a gay person? You can't answer that, because anything goes. They wanna talk about being nice? They're the meanest buggers I've ever seen.

Rather than resort to earnest denunciation, gay and progressive Utahns got together to throw a big party—Buttars-Palooza—to thank the legislator for clarifying the nature of the opposition and bringing them all together. Troy Williams of KRCL and Michael Mueller of Utahns for Marriage Equality brought together a coalition of organizations including Utah Jobs With Justice, the Healthy Environment Alliance, the Brown Berets, Trans Action Utah, the Utah Pride Center and the state branches of Planned Parenthood, the Human Rights Campaign and the ACLU. On a soundstage powered by a giant Solar Saucer, speakers mixed with bands and break dancers. Below, on the lawn of the state Capitol, an unprecedented range of progressive forces gathered to demand social justice across all their issues.

Nonetheless, the barriers to progressive action are as formidable as the powers arrayed against them. Activists are up against an intransigent LDS hierarchy active in state politics and a state legislature as reactionary as any in the country. LGBT kids in Utah still must cope with an often devastatingly hostile environment outside Salt Lake City. A 2008 survey by the Utah Volunteers of America showed that 48 percent of homeless youth in its outreach program identified as LGBT or nonheterosexual. (A documentary by Salt Lake City filmmaker Natalie Avery tracing the difficult plight of these young people was broadcast last year on the public television station KUED.) Yet until recently, it was illegal to offer shelter to a homeless minor in Utah without parental permission. But now, thanks to the passage of HB22 during the 2009 legislative session, homeless or abandoned youth, including runaways from polygamous families and queer kids, can be sheltered by individuals or organizations; notification of the Division of Child and Family Services will prevent criminal charges.

Changing public opinion and shifting demographics lie behind such legislative change, slow as it is. Along with the soaring popularity of departing moderate Republican Governor Huntsman, such changes indicate that the LDS hierarchy and conservative Republican moralists are increasingly out of touch with their constituencies. Most optimistically, my education in Utah leads me to believe that what's happening here can be a model not only for queer progressive politics in the DOMA states but for organizing at the federal level as well.

Every state has specific local conditions to contend with. But many states, Georgia and Texas for example, might profit from a close look at Utah's CGI. Both states have Super DOMAs and no statewide job or housing protections for LGBT residents, but they are also home to dedicated activists and vibrant queer communities in Atlanta and Dallas.

CGI's inclusive strategy might also work well at the national level. During three speeches at the Utah Pride Festival, Cleve

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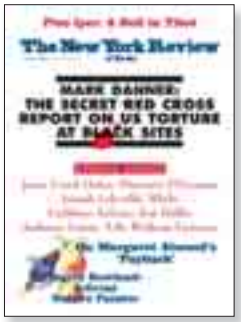

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Jones, former Harvey Milk protégé and founder of the NAMES Project, the AIDS Memorial Quilt, called for an October 11 march on Washington. Jones said that the march would be for "full civil equality," but he never mentioned marriage equality specifically. Though some news outlets reported that he called for a "gay marriage" march, Jones later confirmed in an e-mail to me that though full civil equality includes the right to marry, he intentionally left out a specific appeal on the marriage issue in favor of a single, more all-encompassing sentence. "We seek equal protection under the law, in all matters governed by civil law, in all fifty states," he wrote.

The crowds in Salt Lake City reacted to Jones's call for full civil equality with the kind of energy and emotion that only marriage politics have been generating at LGBT gatherings for nearly a decade. It can be daunting to try to mobilize constituencies with lists of rights, benefits and a more democratic menu of partnership and household recognitions than marriage only. Even universal healthcare, though broadly desired by queer Americans as much as by any others, fails to generate fiery rhetoric or stoke the energy of crowds. It remains to be seen whether a call for full civil equality can produce mass mobilization, or whether it might soon be reduced to a call for gay marriage only, or worse, to the production of just another commercially sponsored gay parade. The devil will be in the details, which will be settled in the weeks to come.

But my months in the Beehive State have taught me that a call for basic fairness and full civil equality, made in terms that include queers but are not limited to them, can rally progressive action in even the most arid conditions. Such outside-the-box strategy, focusing on concrete material benefits that cut across constituencies, can help sidestep the polarizing ferocity of gay-marriage politics, which engulfed California last year. "Full civil equality" expressed in these terms extends beyond the conventional conjugal couple to include the distribution of rights and resources to other individuals and households, to homeless youth, transgendered workers, hounded immigrants, impoverished single parents and beyond.

More ambitious, a close analysis of the CGI agenda's list of benefits can help us realize that universalizing some of those benefits, especially access to healthcare, would obviate the need to attach them to partnerships, households or employment in the first place. Universalized benefits and broader basic household and partnership recognition beyond the conjugal couple might ultimately make marriage less necessary and desirable across the board. Indeed, this vision at the center of the right-wing nightmare (we'll all become unmarried socialists, like in Sweden!) appears to leftist dykes like me as a dream. Perhaps defining queer issues as those that address the needs of most of us (like healthcare or childcare), rather than merely those that address only gay people, can move us out of isolation and into overlapping alliances that might change all our lives for the better.

Instead of advocating domesticity and promoting consumption under the name of equality politics, as the mainstream LGBT movement currently does, we might do something truly weird and definitely queer: look to Utah for inspiration. ■

Our Jobless Recovery

The solution to the US employment crisis depends on manufacturing and trade policy reform.

by LEO HINDERY JR. AND LEO W. GERARD

President Obama just told us that the economic stimulus plan has "already saved or created" 150,000 jobs and that another 450,000 will be "saved or created" by the end of the summer, including 125,000 summer-only jobs for students. It's hard for us to see how this will be the case—we hope it is—but, more important, there's a huge difference between a job that is saved and one that is created. Just ask the 30.2 million workers who are already unemployed.

Obama has spoken forcefully about laying a new foundation for the economy, one that creates good jobs and rising incomes and that moves us from an era of borrow-and-spend to one where we save and invest and are able to produce more at home than we consume. And we agree these are the right goals for the nation. However, we do not believe that the policies the administration is pursuing will get us there, nor is the administration's economic stimulus plan likely to move us toward anything approaching full employment.

By the administration's own estimate, the stimulus plan will "save or create"—there's that phrase again—just 3.5 million jobs over the next two years. But this amount represents less than 30 percent of the unprecedented 14.5 million jobs that have been lost since the recession began in December 2007, and it is just 12 percent of the workers already unemployed.

And yet this is only part of the story of the job-creation deficit we face. Just as worrying as the massive jobless numbers is the fact that our economy is bleeding jobs in the very sector that must grow in order for us to move away from debt-financed consumption as the principal engine of economic growth. Since this recession began, manufacturing has lost 13 percent of its workforce, reflecting a further downsizing of our tradable goods economy.

If these conditions continue, we will head not just toward a jobless, and a manufacturing jobs–less, recovery but also toward an even more weakened economic base that is incapable of sustaining a vibrant middle class. And yet the conditions *will*

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continue unless the administration addresses two serious shortcomings in its economic program.

First, aside from its emergency restructuring of Chrysler and GM, the administration has not outlined a national manufacturing and industrial policy designed to ensure the competitiveness of US-based businesses.

Second, the administration has yet to begin the promised reform of our trade policies with China and the other economies that do not play by the same rules we do.

The Manufacturing Jobs Crisis

The current jobs crisis is in part a reflection of the misplaced priorities of previous administrations, which let America's manufacturing sector decline vis-à-vis our services economy. As a result, manufacturing industries now represent just 11.5 percent of GDP; the number of people working in manufacturing accounts for only 8.7 percent of the jobs in the country; and we have run an average trade deficit in manufactured goods of more than $500 billion over the past five years, all of which contributed to the huge buildup of US debt in recent years.

This almost complete neglect of our manufacturing base relative to our service sector represents the height of irresponsibility, because compared with those in manufacturing, service jobs pay below median wages, do very little to help America's balance of trade, have a much smaller multiplier effect on other parts of the economy and mostly just move incomes around the country.

Regrettably, however, some in the Obama administration have extended this neglect by essentially taking the position that a job is a job, whether it is in the manufacturing or service sector.

And it is just as wrong for them to assume that new jobs associated with exported services will make up for past and future manufacturing job losses, because high-quality service jobs are often dependent on a strong manufacturing sector and thus do not readily substitute for good manufacturing jobs.

Even if the administration does not understand and accept these basic realities, America's main trade competitors certainly do. Germany, Japan and South Korea are doing everything possible to preserve their manufacturing bases during this economic downturn. And China, which accounts for 60 percent of the US trade deficit in manufactured goods, is aggressively accelerating its efforts to grow its manufacturing sector.

An Overdue Manufacturing and Industrial Policy

To avoid the further erosion of our manufacturing base, the Obama administration needs to make a radical break with previous policies. It must begin by enacting a national manufacturing and industrial policy that puts American workers first and is as neomercantilist as the policies of our major trading partners. Only an active industrial policy will be able to right the employment ship and create the millions of jobs needed in this important sector of the economy.

As part of this new manufacturing and industrial policy, the administration must be willing to:

§ "Pick winners" in the economy and then support them, because all other developed nations and China do so every day. The administration has begun to move modestly in this direction with its proposals to encourage private investment in wind and solar energy and by making targeted federal investments in building retrofits, smart grids and meters, and clean transportation systems. But it needs to do much more if it is serious about creating comparative advantages in these and other industries.

§ Fund a ten-year (not the current two-year) program of significant public investment to upgrade and rebuild our nation's infrastructure. Public infrastructure investments not only create jobs; they also facilitate private investments in our manufacturing sector by making them more efficient and productive.

§ Adopt, consistent with WTO rules, "Buy American" requirements related to all federal procurement, especially procurement associated with new investment in infrastructure and green energy initiatives. Federal purchases make up about 20 percent of the economy, yet America is the only nation among the major developed nations and China without a significant "buy domestic" procurement program.

§ Enact major corporate tax reform to make incentives for corporations to create jobs here and eliminate the incentives for them to relocate manufacturing and services abroad.

Complementary Trade Policies

A national industrial policy cannot succeed, however, without complementary trade policies that prevent other economies from gaining unfair competitive advantages. The trade deficits accumulated during the Bush administration—a whopping $4.8 trillion—were a major cause of the loss overseas of 5.3 million manufacturing jobs and more than 2 million service jobs; and they made the economy about $1.5 trillion smaller than it would otherwise have been.

We couldn't afford these economy-zapping job losses then, and we certainly can't afford them now. Even today's recession-shrunken trade deficit of 2.4 percent of GDP will subtract more from the demand for US goods and services than the stimulus plan will add, and in normal times our trade deficits consistently aggregate an even more economy-draining 5 percent or so of GDP.

The administration and Congress need to replace our decades of misguided trade policies with trade agreements that have meaningful labor and environmental standards and that forbid illegal subsidies and currency manipulation. They also need to dispense with "one size fits all" trade agreements that ignore significant differences in levels of development, forms of government and reciprocity. Specifically, there can be no compromise on these principles when it comes to the pending trade deals with South Korea, Panama and Colombia.

Most important, however, we need a fundamental reexamination of our trade relationship with China, which the new administration promised would occur early in this term.

China's massive trade surplus with the United States—a staggering $277 billion of manufactured goods in 2008 alone—is the result of China's severely undervalued currency, massive subsidies to its own manufacturers and elaborate policies to induce foreign corporations to shift their production facilities and technology there. These policies have cost us millions of jobs, and they will keep costing us jobs until they are fixed.

Challenging China over its unfair trade practices is not just necessary for the future of US manufacturing jobs; it is also

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critical for the world economy. The global economy simply cannot function if the third-largest individual economy runs current account surpluses on the order of 8 to 10 percent of GDP, as China has done consistently for the past few years.

Choosing a Fair Solution

In advancing an economic recovery program that makes job creation and the revival of US manufacturing its two principal goals, we will be making a choice about America's future.

About half of the nation's individual income today is earned by the top 10 percent of taxpayers, many of whom have benefited directly or indirectly from the outsourcing of US manufacturing and service jobs, while the other half is earned by the other 150 million or so workers, most of whom have seen their wages stagnate over the past two decades. The top 1 percent of taxpayers earn more than 20 percent of the nation's income, which represents the greatest income inequality in the United States since 1928.

We can either focus our recovery efforts on creating full employment for workers who are not part of the top 1 percent and on rebuilding the country's manufacturing base; or, as we have been doing for nearly three decades, we can concentrate on policies that mostly benefit the incomes of the wealthiest few.

Economically—and ethically—the choice is obvious. ■

Exchange

(continued from page 2)

levels of analysis: the humanly universal, the culturally local, the individual author or reader and the unique demands of the particular work. Why does Deresiewicz ignore this to critique an evolutionary literary criticism supposedly interested only in universals?

Taking a particular example, Deresiewicz writes that "Boyd devotes a hundred pages to the *Odyssey* without saying anything he couldn't have said with *Anna Karenina* or *Middlemarch* or Proust." Has he actually read those hundred pages? Would I spend many pages on the Greek value of xenia in discussing Tolstoy, Eliot or Proust and explaining it in terms of a widely dispersed pastoral ecology and the mores of a low-trust society? Would I dwell at length on the role of inhibition in providing time for reflection, a crucial factor in the behavior of Odysseus and Penelope, and highlighted by Homer's narrative style, if I were discussing European novelists who deploy very different psychological vocabularies and devise new techniques for representing thought? Just who, here, is insensitive to difference?

Brian Boyd

Deresiewicz Replies

Portland, Ore.

My notion of evolutionary psychology (EP) may be fifteen years out of date, but Brian Boyd should tell his fellow critical Darwinists, because it is the notion that much of their work embodies. Joseph Carroll would no doubt be surprised to learn that I have a degree in biology-psychology, but he is right that I am not qualified to judge EP's scientific validity, which is why I consulted one of the world's leading evolutionary biologists. His take on EP: "Lots of conjecture and just-so stories…. Don't trust Pinker. The guys at the NY Times tend to swallow claims whole…without understanding the sand beneath…. There probably really is considerable innate content in the human mind in the form of susceptibilities and proclivities…but we are still a long way from demonstrating precisely what that content is and how malleable it is in a way that a natural scientist could accept."

The assertion that sex differences are rooted in genetics begs the essential question: what are those differences? EP makes claims about reproductive psychology and many other things, but it has yet to find a genetic substrate for any of them.

I do not reject general ideas in favor of unique works; I argue that such works propose general ideas in a fundamentally different way than science does. I agree that the humanities need "real knowledge"; I just don't think that the only form of real knowledge is scientific knowledge.

As for "reactionary humanism," Carroll, like the apostles of Theory from whom he is so eager to distance himself, appears to regard the phrase as tautological: if humanistic, then reactionary. Since when does humanism not believe in universal aspects of human experience? That's the whole basis of humanism, which is why there is no progressive politics without it. In any case, it is quite something to hear Carroll accuse anyone of being reactionary. This is a thinker, as I noted, who believes in the superiority of Western culture and the transhistorical nature of the nuclear family, and who shares Darwinian criticism's rejection of modernism and EP's inveterate endorsement of conservative values. Perhaps he advocates reactionary antihumanism.

As other parts of my review make clear, in speaking of individual cases I was not suggesting that literary studies should only ever deal with one work at time. The question is, what kinds of works is it going to deal with, singly or in groups, and how is it going to deal with them? The new pseudoscience in literary studies would shift our attention from works of specific, enduring significance—books that are worth reading more than once, or at all—to the kinds of things that are superficial enough to be handled statistically without loss of meaning. Such research will never be of more than peripheral value, and much of it belongs in departments of history or sociology, not literary studies.

I obviously didn't mean that the particulars of Boyd's argument about the *Odyssey* would have been the same had he been discussing another book. The point is, he educes those particulars—Homer's narrative strategies and structures—in illustration of a larger argument (authors need to hold our attention) that all too clearly would have been the same no matter what book he had been discussing, as evidenced by the fact that he follows his hundred pages on Homer with another sixty on Dr. Seuss that make exactly the same point. It should also be said that Boyd's reading of the Odyssey is predicated on a set of wild assertions about what Homer added to the oral tradition; marked—unsurprisingly, given his dismissal of meaning—by a general deafness to it (a critic who believes that Odysseus' identity is suppressed in the invocation because he's "too famous to need naming" is not likely to tell us anything useful about the poem); marred by a casual disregard for accuracy (Achilles does not embody "pure strength," kibbutzim are not "religious groups"); and above all, crushingly banal. Is this how Darwinism plans to save the humanities?

William Deresiewicz

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Books & the Arts.

COURTESY ULRICH AND ACHIM DITZEN

Hans Fallada in his study in Carwitz, Germany, in 1934

Iron Hans

by BENJAMIN LYTAL

Hans Fallada is the romantic nom de plume invented by a man who lived through some of the most difficult episodes in his country's history and came out indifferently, neither a hero nor a villain. "Hans" recalls the Grimms' Lucky Hans, a fairy-tale fool who smiles even as he is cheated; and "Falada" is the talking horse in another Grimm tale who, though slaughtered by his mistress's treacherous chambermaid, continues to speak truth to power as a taxidermied trophy. Fallada the man avoided the fate of Falada the horse. "I do not like grand gestures," he said, "being slaughtered before the tyrant's throne, senselessly, to the benefit of no one and to the detriment of my children, that is not my way." He made this excuse, rather grand itself, in 1938, after accepting edits of his latest novel, *Iron Gustav*. The book was part of a Nazi film project, and Joseph Goebbels wielded the blue pencil. *Iron Gustav* tells the story of a coachman whose authoritarian parenting ruins most of his children but who becomes a national hero after he refuses to relinquish his horse and carriage for an automotive taxi. Taking up his editor's suggestions, Fallada extended his narrative's endpoint from 1928 to 1933, twisted Gustav's one decent son into becoming a Nazi storm trooper and made the other, criminal son a member of the Communist Party.

Fallada was not sanguine about these revisions; he complained to his mother that "I am not satisfied with what I'm doing.... I cannot act as I want to—if I want to stay alive." Yet he never disowned *Iron Gustav* or any of his other works that were compromised, to varying degrees, by the editorial expectations of the Third Reich. In an autobiographical address given after the war, "Wie ich Schriftsteller wurde" ("How I Became a Writer"), he tried to explain:

> Perhaps it is best to say, that I am now so far along, that I have learned my craft so well—my occupation being like any other occupation very much

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Little Man, What Now?
By Hans Fallada.
Translated by Susan Bennett.
Melville House. 345 pp. Paper $16.95.

The Drinker
By Hans Fallada.
Translated by Charlotte and A.L. Lloyd.
Melville House. 304 pp. Paper $16.95.

Every Man Dies Alone
By Hans Fallada.
Translated by Michael Hofmann.
Melville House. 543 pp. $27.

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> a craft—that I would say that I have by now mastered my craft to the extent that I can make the most foreign, chance material quite my own.

It was the weaving of the story, out of whatever threads were at hand—political or otherwise—that consumed Fallada. In "How I Became a Writer," he describes the writing process as a sudden, propulsive outpouring, an intoxication, a poisonous addiction, a race to get it all down, a day-and-night binge. It was never a moment for exploratory imaginings or close moral deliberation. He resented the constraints of the Nazi era but saw no reason to abandon his craft.

In 1938, after a last walk on the property of his small farm north of Berlin, he decided not to meet the boat his publisher had sent to ferry him to London: he couldn't bear to leave Germany. He was a man who, after his rootless youth, valued home life immensely. One of the only important writers to remain in Germany for the duration of World War II, Fallada appears to fill an important gap in literary history. But as he might have admitted, he didn't have anything profound to say about the period. He never came close to defending the Nazi Party, as did a more profound writer, Gottfried Benn. He didn't go willingly into exile only to turn around and preach the dangers of National Socialism to his fellow Germans, as did Thomas Mann. And he didn't experience anything that would make for important documentary realism, as did so many witnesses of the Holocaust. His achievement lies elsewhere.

Fallada's time in the wilderness was punctuated by episodes of debauchery in Berlin.

Melville House has reissued two of Fallada's novels, *Little Man, What Now?* (1932) and *The Drinker* (1950), translated by Susan Bennett and Charlotte and A.L. Lloyd, respectively, and published the first English translation of a third, *Every Man Dies Alone* (1947), making the last the centerpiece of an effort to reintroduce Fallada to American audiences. Translated by Michael Hofmann and marketed as the great novel of the German Resistance, *Every Man Dies Alone* showcases Fallada's talent for fluid storytelling. But of the three titles Melville House has brought to light, the real gem is not *Every Man Dies Alone* but *Little Man*.

Published eight months before Hitler came to power, *Little Man* made its author world famous. Movie versions of the story were produced in Germany, in 1933, and in the United States, in 1934. Set against the economic troubles that brought the Weimar Republic to an end, the novel follows two newlyweds attempting to feather their nest even as unemployment looms. Despite Fallada's ambition as a social commentator, he would always make the family unit the building block of his stories. This was his signature pattern, and *Little Man* was its crystallization.

Born Rudolf Ditzen in 1893 in Greifswald, in northern Germany, Fallada was almost 40 when he composed *Little Man*. As Jenny Williams makes clear in her indispensable biography, *More Lives Than One*, Fallada had by that time been humbled by events and was clinging to the normalcy that his wife afforded him. During his youth, in the years preceding World War I, Fallada fit the profile of the bourgeois Wilhelmine rebel: discouraged by arbitrary philological rigor in school, hampered by puritanical attitudes toward sex, intimidated by the militarism of his society. He vented his feelings by turning to *fin de siècle* writers like Oscar Wilde. For a time he went by the name Harry, after Dorian Gray's aristocratic corruptor, and he composed a poem titled "The Great Weariness" while still a teenager.

Fallada typified the extremes of this era when he and his friend Hanns Dietrich von Necker made a pact—each would submit a poem to a third party for judgment, and the author of the work judged inferior would be shot. Their poems were never submitted, understandably. But Fallada's desperate obsession with a girl led to a second, more serious pact with Necker. Hoping to disguise their suicides as a duel, the two precipitous youths climbed to a famous lookout, paced off and fired. Having missed their targets, the two young men were forced to reload—with Necker tending to Fallada's rifle for him, as Fallada didn't know how to service it. In the next round, Necker missed, but Fallada hit his man. At Necker's request, Fallada took his friend's pistol and finished him off. Then he turned it on himself. The bullet skipped past his heart and punctured a lung. He was found and rescued.

Fallada's father, who served on the Imperial Supreme Court at Leipzig, was in a position to ensure that his son was deemed disturbed, saving him from a criminal sentence. But Fallada's fall from grace, though not adjudged criminal, saw him committed to a sanitarium, knocking the 19-year-old off course for his university entrance exams. Suddenly second-class, the would-be writer stood cut off from education in the large German sense of *Bildung*. Fallada was sent to work as a steward on private estates and was eventually based in Berlin, working for a "seed potato company" set up in 1916 to improve agricultural production during wartime. He claimed, shortly before he died, that he had learned to identify 1,200 varieties of the tuber.

Fallada's time in the wilderness was punctuated by episodes of debauchery in Berlin and other cities. He once sold his 3,000-volume library to buy morphine, but more often he subsidized his binges with funds stolen from his employers; and he ended up serving two jail sentences for theft and embezzlement. Reporting for his first prison sentence, in June 1924, Fallada traveled north through the provinces. In a notebook entry dated August 2, he recorded the desire to write a novel about an ex-convict's struggle to make his way in the world "with the help of a simple young woman." On the next day he followed up, "I really ought to find out more about ordinary people.... But I know nothing about it." He seems to have been generally unhappy during this period; he later disowned the two Expressionist novels he published in the early 1920s, *Young Goedeschal* and *Anton and Gerda*, claiming that they did not come from his true self. (They were the first books he wrote under his pen name, which he took in order not to embarrass his father.) Though *Young Goedeschal* is autobiographical, about the angst-ridden son of a judge, Fallada's artistic fingerprint is faint: the adolescent hero thinks out loud while pacing his room, looking in the mirror, leaning his forehead against a windowpane, snubbing out a cigarette and burying his face in his hands. The eventfulness of Fallada's later work, by contrast, seems designed to prevent such narcissism. *Goedeschal* was subtitled "A Novel of Puberty"—not the traditional *Bildungsroman* but a *Pubertätsroman*.

By the time he sat down to write *Little Man, What Now?*, Fallada had reformed himself significantly. He saw his vocation as stemming not from desperate teenage vigils but from his years as a farm steward, walking rows of beets, monitoring the gossips who were weeding them, chatting with suppliers and standing for hours after work as his boss lectured him on the business of the farm. Fallada's mature stylistic modesty, if you looked it up in manuals of German literature, would come under the *Neue Sachlichkeit*, the

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"new objectivity" or "new sobriety," a wash of cold water that overtook the inflation-ridden, decadent Berlin of the '20s. The Expressionist publishers of the 1910s—including Fallada's legendary house, Rowohlt—began to do translations of Balzac and Zola, and the youngest poets, including immigrants like W.H. Auden, studied the bone-dry verse of Bertolt Brecht. Fallada's evolution from Expressionist to fluent storyteller certainly fits the "new sobriety" label. He became a craftsman who respected money and always tried to turn his books in ahead of schedule. Fallada achieved this transformation not by drifting into a chilly objectivity but through a much more personal influence—marriage.

After his second stint in prison, 1926–28, Fallada took a job with a newspaper and joined a temperance society called the Good Templar Order, where he met a working-class woman named Anna "Suse" Margarethe Issel. Fallada married her in 1929. George Grosz once sketched Suse: she has a round face with level cheekbones, a ski-slope nose and small teeth. Her expression is alert and almost apprehensive, the soul of responsibility.

She was just what Fallada had been looking for. He was marrying down, from his parents' perspective, confirming but simultaneously redeeming the fall from grace that had begun with his suicide attempt and his failure to finish high school. Suse became a kind of savior for Fallada; his enthusiasm, as recorded in this letter of 1930, might seem fake, were it not borne out in his work:

> If I have ever loved another human being on God's earth, then Suse is the one.... I have a wonderful wife. She is goodness, tranquility, gentleness, calmness in person. There can be no better, more loyal, more courageous partner in the world.

She was his muse, a muse of good common sense and sound home economics. Few change so much, between their juvenilia and their maturity, as Fallada did. Once the careening romantic son of a Supreme Court judge, he had his little wife, his temperance society and his new leaf, which he kept turning over and over, pondering the magic of his own reform.

"Perhaps I did once—at the very beginning—I really cannot remember now—want to write a novel about unemployment," Fallada recalled with a characteristic show of carelessness a few months after the publication of *Little Man, What Now?*, "but gradually and imperceptibly this book became a tribute to a woman." He had started the book only one year earlier, in October 1931, when he outlined a political novel with a weak man at its center, a man whose brother-in-law was a Communist and whose co-workers were intense Fascists. Writing to keep his publisher and his young family afloat, he finished the manuscript in only four months.

A tribute to Suse emerged from the very mechanics of *Little Man*'s plot. The young man, Pinneberg, nicknames his girlfriend Lammchen—which alludes to Fallada's pet name for Suse, Schäfchen (little sheep). Pinneberg gets Lammchen pregnant, frets and decides to marry her while standing in the stairwell of her building. As a married woman, Lammchen is expected not to work, and the Pinnebergs suddenly have one income rather than two. Lammchen can't cook, but she does keep a ruthless budget. Pinneberg loses his job with a food wholesaler and takes Lammchen to Berlin. Living for a month with his disreputable mother, he cadges a job selling menswear at one of Berlin's famous department stores. Holding that job amid the rising tide of unemployment, taking care of an infant son ("the Shrimp") in an illegal two-room apartment accessible only by ladder, Pinneberg and Lammchen become true partners in their marriage. In the end, Pinneberg loses his job, and then his sense of decency and worth—which only Lammchen can restore to him. Fallada sent Pinneberg back home with bad news again and again, and then propped him up each time with Lammchen's love and support.

Fallada's mini-chapters ran like a course of dominoes, quickly falling, quickly clicking.

Mock-heroic chapter headings gently suggest the tentative pride of the newlyweds. Fallada is never quite a satirist. In "Kessler Reveals Himself. How Pinneberg Stays on Top and Heilbutt Saves the Day," Fallada sketches the dynamics of floor sales and grants Pinneberg a memorable colleague, the reserved and slightly wizardly Heilbutt, who in "On the Three Types of Salesman and Which Type Is Preferred by Under-Manager Jänecke. Invitation to a Snack" rebuffs Jänecke, the overpaid consultant whose job it is to cut costs. "Pinneberg Receives His Wages, Behaves Badly to a Salesman and Becomes the Owner of a Dressing-Table" narrates the bourgeois impulses that lead Pinneberg to purchase a hulking piece of furniture, and "Lammchen Has a Visitor and Looks at Herself in the Mirror. No One Mentions Money All Evening" takes up the ensuing awkwardness.

Pinneberg's misfortunes have little to do with the wild vicissitudes of Fallada's previous life; indeed, they unfold with an incremental dailiness that had more to do with Fallada's new life and its strong domestic rhythms. Fallada was writing for money, perhaps, but he was so proud to win money for his young wife that his workaday novel became imbued with authentic feeling. Posing as a man of taste, sweating buckets to sell his quota of cummerbunds, Pinneberg was a type—the salaried workers of the Weimar era who, lacking the strong unions of the proletariat or the wealth of the bourgeoisie, took unemployment and inflation on the chin, and turned to Hitler sooner and in greater numbers than any other class. (Fallada had read Siegfried Kracauer's groundbreaking study *The Salaried Masses*, published in 1930, which took this group as a demographic novelty.) Pinneberg and Fallada had one thing in common: they brought order to chaos by starting a little family.

After *Little Man*, Fallada wrote most of his novels in a frenzy of self-discipline. Indeed, like a writer of thrillers, he was praised primarily for his narrative—it was fleet, an engine of short strokes. His preferred form, from *Little Man* on, was the mini-chapter. Not episodic in the parti-colored, wandering, quixotic sense, these were tiny similar narrative units that ran like a course of dominoes, quickly falling, quickly clicking. Fallada even had a law that he could never on any day write less than on the previous day, and his minimum would inevitably creep up as the weeks passed. Conditions may have demanded it, but speed became his style. His publisher saluted him in letters: "Lieber Meister Ditzen," using the word "Meister," for a master craftsman. Fallada's professionalism was a form of modesty—he made a hard-to-translate distinction between literature and mere writing, disclaiming the title "Dichter." Disdaining the Faustian aspirations of his youth, however, he forfeited some of the stature traditionally afforded serious German writers, and with it his right to take himself seriously.

Fallada's first major experience of Fascist rule came in 1933, when he was briefly imprisoned by brownshirts on suspicion of conspiracy against Hitler. Two years later, he was declared an "undesirable author," but this

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designation was rescinded after three months. *Little Man* was a novel that basically kept to itself. Fallada was too content with his own stint as a little man—with his marriage and his new sobriety—to really get angry about unemployment. But he would spend the mid-1930s producing novels that skirted politics completely. Writing in *The New Republic*, Lionel Trilling called one of these, *Once We Had a Child* (1934), a tale of a remote island farm, a "retreat": "though Fallada has lost nothing of his sound minor talent, he has lost immeasurably in dignity and relevance."

In 1938 another of these books, *Wolf Among Wolves*, about inflation in the 1920s, inadvertently earned the approval of Goebbels. Fallada hated the strutting arrogance of the Third Reich and never joined the Nazi Party, but Goebbels was determined to make use of him. Fallada was soon offered a contract with Tobis Film Company to write a novel for adaptation: *Iron Gustav* was the result. (The movie was to star Emil Jannings, but it was never made.) Meanwhile, Fallada's position deteriorated. On July 1, 1938, Rowohlt was banned for publishing the work of a Jew under a pseudonym. Fallada and the rest of Rowohlt's authors were relegated to Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, a risk-averse publisher based in Stuttgart; and when Goebbels asked for changes to *Iron Gustav*, Fallada may have felt he had no other protector. He later claimed that fear of concentration camps forced him to take Goebbels's revisions but that "nevertheless the guilt of every line I wrote then still weighs on me today." In 1939 the Stuttgart Hitler Youth offered Fallada a commission for a children's story, and he fulfilled it: "Sweetmilk Speaks: An Adventure of Murr and Maxe" is the tale of a boy who saves his father's factory from a revolutionary Communist. In the fall of 1939, a few weeks after Germany declared war on France and Britain, Fallada accepted a commission from Carl Fröhlich, president of the Reich Film Chamber, to write a Zarah Leander vehicle about a German girl who has been in America and returns to learn about the "New Germany." Fallada wrote the script, *This Heart Which Belongs to You*, in seventeen days and was paid 25,000 marks.

As the war dragged on, Fallada's life fell apart. As a major in the Reichsarbeitsdienst (the Reich Labor Service), he took three official trips to the front in 1943. He grew apart from Suse, drank heavily and resumed his morphine habit, and by 1944, they were divorced. During an argument with Suse soon after their break, he fired a gun. For this he was sent to a psychiatric prison.

Written in prison, in secret and at a moment of great exasperation, Fallada's darkest book has little to say about the year it was written. *The Drinker*, for Fallada a rare first-person novel, is told by Erwin Sommer, a middle-aged wholesaler whose lassitude about his business and his marriage relaxes him to the extent that he decides to try schnapps for the first time. Fallada rushes him into alcoholism and then lets him spin—Erwin pretends that his failure is merely a personal choice and accuses his wife, Magda, of being too "efficient" when she tries to help him. This cycle of marital misprision runs exactly counter to that of *Little Man*, in which the two partners are learning what Erwin and Magda unlearn. The writing is less comic, and Erwin's inebriated narration involves deft psychological writing closer to our conventional notions of literary excellence than anything in *Little Man*. But *Little Man* has more character and éclat.

In 1938 Fallada's *Wolf Among Wolves* inadvertently earned the approval of Goebbels.

The end of the war found Fallada making overtures to the Soviets, who regarded him as a famous man whose record was sufficiently ambiguous. Fallada gave a speech in the small town of Feldberg, proclaiming, "The Russians come as your friends." Johannes Becher, director of the Cultural Association for the Democratic Renewal of Germany, provided Fallada with a Gestapo file that would make interesting material for an anti-Fascist novel. Fallada found the material thin but took a second look when a film company sweetened the deal. He wrote the novel in a monthlong spree.

At heart a cops-and-robbers story, *Every Man Dies Alone* begins with the couple described in the file—the Hampels, whose details Fallada alters slightly. The Quangels, as he calls them, are two working-class Berliners who decide to foment something like a word-of-mouth campaign against the Third Reich. By dropping handwritten notecards that question the Führer's judgment in stairwells and hallways around the city, they hope to remind like-minded citizens that dissent is possible and perhaps even inspire others to launch copycat projects: "We will inundate Berlin with postcards, we will slow the machines, we will depose the Führer, end the war." After two years of painstaking work, lettering the cards on Sundays and dropping them on Mondays, Otto Quangel finally drops a card on the floor of his own factory and is caught. Dogged Inspector Escherich can't wait to tell his culprit "what panic, ruin, and hardship he has brought to so many people." The inspector's map of Berlin, crammed with pins denoting drop-off points, shocks Otto. Out of 285 cards, 267 were voluntarily turned in to the authorities by terrified citizens. Nothing comes of the campaign but the couple's arrest and execution.

This scenario could have come alive in Fallada's hands. The Quangels are a marital team blundering through with dignity intact, badly calibrated to the forces around them, just like Pinneberg and Lammchen in *Little Man*. To work their story up into a novel, however, Fallada had to resort to "all the tricks, old and new," as he boasts in "How I Became a Writer." He surrounds Inspector Escherich with ne'er-do-wells—lovable, wheedling drunks; miserable, conniving drunks; sadistic SS men; and criminal children—padding the novel with their cat-and-mouse games. Meanwhile, the marital crisis reflected in *The Drinker*—a book that falters, perhaps, because Erwin loses touch with his wife after she has him institutionalized—continues, subterraneously, here. If there is one deep and ever fruitful tendency in Fallada's fiction, it is his obsession with marriage. But the Quangels barely talk, and Otto ignores his wife's qualms about the scope of their campaign: "Isn't this thing that you're wanting to do, isn't it a bit small, Otto?"

The question can also be asked of Fallada. His complacency and work ethic survived the war, and he accepted the commission from the Soviets as he had accepted those from the Nazis. Though *Every Man Dies Alone* is much better than some of his Nazi-era books, and reflects the benefits of postwar freedom, it is more concerned with the art of storytelling—with generating clever subplots and minor characters—than with an examination of evil. When the film company approached Fallada about writing a Resistance novel based on the Hampels, he had been about to start a very different book, one about a young refugee trying to make a life amid the rubble of Berlin. There's no evidence that Fallada regretted *Every Man* once he wrote it—he thought it was one of his greatest books. But the story about the kid living in the rubble sounds so much better suited to Fallada's interests and talents—not resistance but a little hustling, a struggle to put together a life. It's a pity he had to hustle so much to live his own. ■

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Mahler's Body

by DAVID SCHIFF

Saturated with lachrymose melodies, dirgelike rhythms and the ghastly, fatal oompahs of sad waltzes, the songs and symphonies of Gustav Mahler prophetically mourn the victims of twentieth-century catastrophes the composer died too soon to witness, or perhaps even imagine. At least that's how his work sounds today, converging in our ears with music about various horrors written by composers he inspired: Alban Berg, Dmitri Shostakovich, Benjamin Britten, Leonard Bernstein. Because of their achievements, and the Mahleresque tones of composers as different as Arnold Schoenberg and Franz Schmidt, Anton Webern and Kurt Weill, Luciano Berio and George Crumb, Mahler seems like a far more central figure than he was during his lifetime, when French composers dismissed him as German, Germans considered him to be Viennese and the Viennese either admired or detested him for being a Jew.

After his death, Alma Mahler described her husband as a "Christgläubiger Jude," a Jew who believed in Christ. Henry-Louis de La Grange's inability to discern the many shades of this statement and other racial and religious characterizations of Mahler undermines his monumental biography of the composer, of which the fourth and final volume, *A New Life Cut Short*, has finally appeared in English. Its 1,758 pages chronicle less than three and a half years of Mahler's fifty-year life, from his arrival in New York City in December 1907 to his death in Vienna in May 1911.

For the Mahlers, Manhattan offered an escape from mounting artistic and political opposition at the composer's musical home, the Vienna Court Opera, and a change of scenery after the death of their youngest daughter from diphtheria. Although his supporters viewed his dismissal from the directorship of the Court Opera as the squalid end of a glorious era—Gustav Klimt was heard to exclaim, "*Vorbei!*" (It's over!) as the train pulled away—Mahler arrived in Manhattan not as a disgraced exile but a visiting celebrity, a star maestro with a glamorous young wife. Enticed by lucrative offers from the Metropolitan Opera and the New York Philharmonic, the Mahlers resided in grand hotel splendor for a musical season of roughly four months and then returned to Europe, which remained their center of gravity. During the summers Gustav retreated to an Alpine resort, where he would take refuge in a prefab cabin—shipped from Vienna and fenced off from admirers—and toil away at compositions on an upright piano. The summer of 1908 brought forth *Das Lied von der Erde*; the summer of 1909, his Ninth Symphony. During the summer of 1910, while sketching a never-completed Tenth, Gustav learned that Alma, who was in a sanatorium convalescing from nervous exhaustion, was having an affair with another patient, the architect Walter Gropius. During the innovative but stressful New York musical season later that year, Gustav developed flulike symptoms stemming from an incurable infection. Death in America was unimaginable. The Mahlers returned to Vienna, and on May 18 the composer died.

Much of Vienna's artistic community turned out for his burial. Schoenberg and Webern later wrote aphoristic, bell-haunted compositions that memorialized the moment Mahler's body was lowered into the ground next to his daughter's grave. But such tender notes of commemoration were drowned out by Mahler's anti-Semitic critics, who persisted in accusing Mahler of having destroyed the prestige of Viennese musical culture. The *Deutsches Volksblatt* wrote that he had earned "the universal hatred of the artists of our artistic institution [the Vienna Court Opera] as a result of his arrogance. He contributed much to the deplorable Judaization of that institution."

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A 1902 engraving of Gustav Mahler, by Emil Orlik

Gustav Mahler
A New Life Cut Short (1907–1911).
By Henry-Louis de La Grange.
Oxford. 1,758 pp. $140.

Raised a Catholic, Alma Mahler remained sporadically observant and casually anti-Semitic throughout her adult life, and by calling her deceased husband a "Christgläubiger Jude" she buried him in a categorical minefield. "Christian" and "Jew" were loaded terms and shaped Mahler's life daily; as Sander Gilman explains in *The Case of Sigmund Freud*, the opposite of "Jew" in late-nineteenth-century Europe was not "Christian" but "Aryan." Alma could have called Gustav a "Christian" or even a Catholic, since he had been baptized in 1897. Or she could have identified him as a German, as Mahler had done with vehemence to a New York journalist in 1910, denying that he was Czech, despite his Moravian birthplace, and not even mentioning his Ashkenazi background. De La Grange, oddly repeating the sanitizing efforts he accurately detects among some of Mahler's non-Jewish associates, spends many pages trying to prove that Mahler lacked any connection to Judaism, did not know either Hebrew or Yiddish and had not observed the bar mitzvah ritual at 13. But these are irrelevant, if not dubious, claims because in Mahler's day "Jew," like "Christian," had become a racial term, detached from questions of creed.

Despite the prevalence of anti-Semitism, Mahler took full advantage of the piecemeal emancipation—freedom of movement, freedom to own a small business, access to education—that gradually allowed Jews to enter mainstream Viennese society. He also revered a pantheon of German cultural heroes: Beethoven, Wagner, Goethe, Kant, Nietzsche. For Mahler, cultural identification trumped ethnic and political affiliation; even though he lived most of his life within the Hapsburg Empire, he thought of himself as a German rather than an Austrian. As a believer Mahler was also more culturally German than narrowly Austrian. Though nominally a Catholic after his baptism, Mahler drew his religious ideas from lesser-known thinkers, such as his friend Siegfried Lipiner (also a Jewish-born convert to Christianity), who espoused a pantheistic humanism far removed from both doctrinal Catholicism and the acute Nietzschian skepticism that the non-Jewish Richard Strauss could bring to life musically (in *Also Sprach Zarathustra*) without fear of being labeled a rootless cosmopolitan.

Hardly a raving Jewish anti-Semite like

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Otto Weininger, Mahler nevertheless perceived his Jewishness to be an encumbrance, even a physical disability. He told a friend that being a Jew was like having one arm shorter than the other. As it happens, Mahler did have a physical impediment. His right leg twitched uncontrollably, leaving him with a notoriously unsteady gait that was seized upon by others as a stereotypical marker of Jewish bodily degeneration: caricatures of Mahler at the podium portrayed him as a puppet pulled by strings, lacking any kind of spine. His appearance was protean to an uncanny degree. Even people close to Mahler described him in contradictory ways: old, young, sickly, strong, pallid, swarthy. His face was grotesque, a cross of the features of Beethoven and Goethe. His body appeared either divine or demonic. Schoenberg called him a saint; Oscar Fried called him a messiah of music. Alma once found his white flesh Lucifer-like; but near the end of his life she wrote of "his naked, painfully emaciated body. No one felt any shame. It was Christ's Entombment. This was the thought that came to all of us."

Mahler's life and work were ruled by a double bind: the more he distanced himself from whatever aspects of his Jewish background society found debased, the more strongly people saw his Jewish identity inscribed forever, as in Kafka's story "The Penal Colony," in the flesh. Mahler was snared by this infernal trap many times during the last years of his life, the most public episode being the premiere of his Eighth Symphony in the fall of 1910, one month after the revelation of his wife's infidelity.

The Eighth, immediately dubbed by promoters the Symphony of a Thousand, was unprecedented, even though it drew on Beethoven's Ninth and Liszt's Faust Symphony. A *summa*—at once symphony, oratorio and opera, and even a mass, as Mahler told his friend Alfred Roller—it deployed vast choral and instrumental forces to set two texts, the seventh-century Christian Pentecost hymn "Veni, Creator Spiritus" and the closing scene from Part II of Goethe's *Faust*, ending with the "Chorus Mysticus" in praise of the Eternal Feminine. Never before had Mahler set a text of Christian liturgy, but by coupling it with Goethe's heterodox vision of redemption he created an ecumenical musical cathedral (the first sound is made by an organ) consecrated to the totality of European (German) culture from the early Middle Ages to the present, a culture based in Christianity but transcending it.

Despite the audience's ecstatic cheers, Mahler's musical embrace of Germanness, even on such an unprecedented scale (or perhaps because of it), was quickly assailed. De La Grange notes: "The general feeling throughout Germany and Austria was that the overwhelming reception accorded to the Eighth had been largely a Jewish phenomenon." As the composer Max Reger said at the time, "This Mahler affair is becoming a problem—all these on whom the Lord has bestowed a Semitic nose are naturally enthusiastic supporters of Mahler, since the Jews have urgent need of a great composer!" Never mind the sublime notes; it all came down to the nose. Even Adorno could not separate the music from the countenance: he titled his close reading of Mahler's music, written in 1960, *Mahler: A Musical Physiognomy*. Yet Adorno's harsh assessment of the Eighth as a formulaic example of the "genre chef-d'oeuvre" is also a valuable reminder that not all of Mahler's critics were anti-Semites. Or wrong.

From the outset, Mahler's music would be death-ridden, but defiant rather than elegiac.

Infirma nostri corporis. These words, reiterated so as to rise from the hymnal text, inspire one of the few personal moments among the hollow hosannas of the Eighth Symphony. *Our bodies are weak*. Mahler was proud of his athleticism, but he was short and slight. People said his coffin could have held the body of a child. Yet like Leonard Bernstein, who was similarly built, Mahler loomed large: he conducted expansively with his entire body, unlike his tall friend Richard Strauss, who never sweated on the podium.

Infirma nostri corporis. Mahler knew of bodily weakness early on. His older brother died in his first year from an unexplained accident. In all, eight of Mahler's thirteen siblings would die in early childhood: of his three surviving younger brothers, one died in early adolescence; one was mentally unstable and fled, untraced, to America; and the last committed suicide. Mahler had to live with the dual legacy of the survivor: a sense of guilt and an equally burdensome sense of inexplicable luck. From his very first composition, a funeral march introduced by a polka, Mahler's music would be death-ridden, but defiant rather than elegiac. The first three symphonies employ the familiar musical archetypes of the funeral march and the hymn to map an ascendant route from death to life eternal. In the First, the grotesque dirge of the third movement leads directly to an affirmative finale in which the brass section blasts the tune from Handel's "Hallelujah Chorus" over the words "And He shall live forever and ever." The Second, whose first movement was originally titled *Totenfeier*, or funeral rite, repeats the journey but more expansively, adding a chorus and offstage brass to transport the listener beyond the end of days to general resurrection. The Third inflates the pattern once more into a two-hour musical ascent through the great chain of being, from mere matter to divine love.

Repeated and magnified in these three symphonies, growing ever longer and louder, the journey to life everlasting begins to sound like a desperate fixation, or maybe just a bad musical habit. Perhaps this was Mahler's point as he retraced the archetypical plotline of the nineteenth-century symphony, a journey from doubt to faith heard in Beethoven's Ninth, Brahms's First and Tchaikovsky's Fourth and Fifth. For Mahler's audience, the plot was familiar but the style new and unsettling; Mahler, like Strauss, was a musical realist. Both composers thought of their sophisticated techniques of orchestration, thematic development and polyphony as quasi-scientific tools. Mahler aspired to both the condition of the novel, with its power of psychological analysis, and the photograph.

Also like Strauss, Mahler wrote that all of his symphonies were autobiographical. Strauss struck an autobiographical note in an opera and two tone poems, but with the same clear-eyed objectivity he applied to Don Juan or Salome; he enjoyed painting himself as a card-playing everyman, an ordinary guy who happened to be a genius. Mahler's autobiographical presence is far more devious and elusive. Memories of loss and rejection are secreted away in the texts of songs whose melodies have become wordless themes. The funeral march of the First Symphony quotes a tune from "Songs of a Wayfarer": "The two blue eyes of my sweetheart have sent me out into the world." The funeral march of the Fifth alludes in passing to the song cycle *Kindertotenlieder*: "Now will the sun rise as brightly as if no misfortune had befallen in the night."

Habitually deriving symphonies from songs, Mahler created an intertextual web in which his own life, his own body, is both revealed and concealed. Complex cross-references make it perilous to connect specific events in the life to specific moments in the music, as de La Grange and other critics

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would like to do. If anything, the music seemed to predict events, not record them. In 1906, when his marriage and career seemed carefree, Mahler completed the *Kindertotenlieder* and the Sixth Symphony, known as the "Tragic." In the Sixth, Mahler composed his only extended romantic slow movement, a second, expanded musical love letter to Alma that uncharacteristically sounds like ripe Rachmaninoff; but in the finale, the fragments of that love music are trampled repeatedly under the sounds of a relentless death march, punctuated by three fatal strikes with a huge hammer. The following year, as if he were composing not just music but his life as well, Mahler would be forced out of his position in Vienna, his first daughter would die and doctors would tell him, not quite accurately, that his heart was defective and his days numbered. Mahler later deleted the final hammer blow from the Sixth, but Alma reinstated it with her sanatorium tryst in the summer of 1910.

nfirma. The two non-Jews closest to Mahler, his wife and the set designer Alfred Roller, fixated on his fleshly condition with a mixture of veneration and repugnance. Roller was Mahler's most important artistic collaborator; together they revolutionized operatic production in Vienna. Yet Roller felt impelled to rid Mahler of lingering traces of Jewishness. Roller claimed that Mahler "never made an issue of his Jewishness. His sense of being chosen by God came from personal, not racial roots." He implored Mahler to commemorate his conversion by composing a Mass; Mahler resisted, saying he could compose all the movements but the credo, but when he completed the Eighth he told Roller that it was, in effect, the Mass he had demanded. Roller also thought that conversion had to manifest itself in the flesh. He wrote a minutely detailed description of Mahler's physique after keenly observing his friend's body during a sunbathing session, and tended "to make of Mahler a sort of 'honorary Aryan.'" Compounding unconscious homoeroticism and inverted racial fear, Roller touches on Mahler's small feet and perfect toes and calls his body "faultlessly beautiful." In Roller's eyes, the immaculate body proved that the spirit was similarly unblemished.

Infirma. The story of Mahler's marriage, when he was 42, to a woman nineteen years his junior conveys how the dark waters of racism turned even murkier when they converged with an equally pervasive sexism. Alma Schindler, beautiful, brilliant, cultured and musically gifted, was at once a victim of

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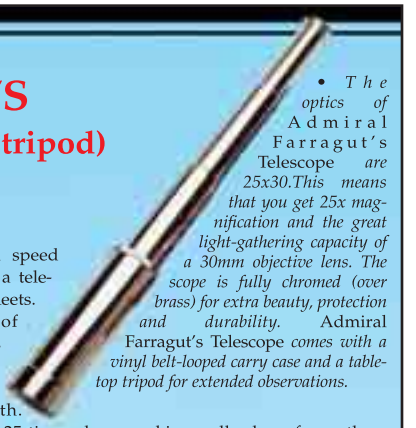

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the period's sexism and a skilled navigator of its treacherous currents. Bereft by the early death of her father, a famous artist, and stymied by social convention, she seduced older men, most but not all Jewish and ugly (the terms were interchangeable for her) who craved her devotion and were easily wounded by the slightest sign of her displeasure. As Mahler's partner, though, Alma found herself forced to play the roles of child-bearer, helpmeet, hausfrau, shiksa goddess and trophy wife; before Mahler married Alma, his sister Justine had fulfilled all the nonconjugal duties of the job. Mahler also exercised his conjugal rights by demanding that Alma forgo her work in musical composition; her job was to serve him alone.

In New York City, Alma inhabited the role of Frau Mahler with flair, charming the high society that supported music. But it was hard work, and she would return each year to Europe in a state of exhaustion, which her husband barely noticed. Increasingly he acted more like a mentor than a lover, showing his affection through lengthy discussions of Kant or Goethe. He was turning into Gustav von Aschenbach, the fictional character whose physical features Thomas Mann based on Mahler's; or worse, he was becoming an absurd pedant like Heinrich Mann's Professor Unrat. Alma, his blue angel, held the keys to his destruction. When Alma rejected her husband's body and began a passionate affair with Gropius—young, handsome and Aryan—Mahler's universe collapsed; he completed no music after he discovered the affair, and he died less than a year later. But before Alma betrayed him, Mahler had already composed his own death, twice.

Das Lied von der Erde and the Ninth, both composed after the move to New York, could be termed Mahler's New World symphonies. Unlike Dvorák, however, Mahler showed little interest in American music or American culture. His command of English was so rudimentary that he could not read a newspaper. And yet these symphonies (he avoided the generic title for *Das Lied* out of superstition) summon a cultural universe different from their predecessors'. The Chinese poems Mahler set in *Das Lied* make no reference to God or the afterlife; mankind appears without divisions of race or nationality. Whereas the early symphonies progressed from death to resurrection, the six movements of *Das Lied* survey the ages of man from youth to death and locate eternity on earth rather than in heaven. Death itself appears, in the last song, "The Farewell," not as the tragic blow of the Sixth but in a luminous, protracted fadeout as a singer repeats the word *ewig* (eternal).

Mahler had now composed a definitive musical farewell, but there were two earthly cycles to come. In the summer of 1909 he composed his Ninth; the ease with which it appeared seems inexplicable, given its emotional and musical complexity. It begins as if in continuation of *Das Lied*, with a melody still intoning *ewig* and a harp sounding like a Chinese lute; but these peaceful echoes resound against a repeated, unsteady rhythmic figure, its three notes divided asymmetrically between cellos and horn. Mahler upturns the values of *Das Lied* while at the same time affirming them. One could say, using terms Mahler would have scorned, that the Ninth becomes a Talmudic commentary to the Song-Symphony's Torah. Mahler confronts the Eastern, pentatonic themes of *Das Lied* with contorted, all-too-European chromatic melodies of longing and pain; he marks one such passage "*Leidenshaftlich*," *molto appassionato*, not the passion of eros, but of suffering. Rewriting *Das Lied* with its two drinking songs, Mahler seems to chastise himself for dulling human misery with Chinese wine.

And yet the earthly vision of *Das Lied* does not allow Mahler to revert to his old heaven-seeking path. Instead he adopts the design of Tchaikovsky's Sixth Symphony, the "*Pathétique*" (Mahler claimed to detest the Sixth and only conducted it, apparently without much conviction, in his final New York season). Tchaikovsky had placed two contrasting scherzos in the middle of the symphony and ended with an adagio movement, an imagined death that fades slowly to silence—and Mahler followed this *via crucis* precisely, though he felt obliged, as a good German composer, to enrich Tchaikovsky's structure with thematic elaboration and dense counterpoint. Mahler also imitated Tchaikovsky's thematic dualism, his tendency to build movements out of two big tunes with little in common but in a manner that also seems derived from the cyclical worldview of *Das Lied*. The contrasting themes don't interact or evolve; they recur over and over like the completing principles of yin and yang.

In his analysis of the Ninth, de La Grange castigates Leonard Bernstein's doomful reading of the symphony—especially in his Harvard lectures, *The Unanswered Question*—as a work that not only foretells Mahler's death but the death of music too. In particular, he questions Bernstein's characterization of the opening unsteady rhythmic theme as the sound of a cardiac arrhythmia. As if whistling in the dark, de La Grange reminds us that in the summer of 1909 Mahler's heart problems seemed to have subsided and his marital crisis was a year in the distance. Still, Bernstein's interpretation gains credibility from the fact that Mahler borrowed the heartbeat gesture from the opening bars of Strauss's "Death and Transfiguration," in which its meaning, thanks to Strauss's genius for musical depiction, is unmistakable. But Mahler's figure is not a personal EKG—it is a universal arrhythmia. Or, heard in a different way, it is Mahler's nervous gait transformed into an emblem of human vulnerability, which his music fleshes out with a compelling mixture of self-knowledge and compassion. ■

Ground Control

Hollowed-out bones are more buoyant,
like the stray dog wagging its tail
while following us back to the car.
You asked if we could keep it;
I said that whatever gets buried
eventually climbs out of its hole,
and just because something can float
doesn't mean it can swim.
So I'll hold this snackpack close to my chest
as we head toward open water, especially
now that meals have been discontinued
on most long-distance flights,
but people still want to fly.

ALAN GILBERT

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Just a Game?

by STUART KLAWANS

The things that you lose in the course of a long life, and the things you might somehow hold on to, are the stuff of Agnès Varda's latest essay film—"stuff" being a clunky word to apply where this innately elegant artist is concerned but also inescapable, since she likens her method in this film to dumping the contents of a purse.

Out tumble lint, valuables, makeup, mementos, business receipts, scraps of notepaper and pieces of identification, official and otherwise. Some of this accumulation, such as the family snapshots, might belong to any grandmother, as I think Varda would admit. Having dedicated a significant part of her work to making common cause with other women, she readily counts herself among their company. That said, though, she knows her career within this collectivity has been singular, and so are most of the odds and ends she pours out before the viewer. Founding member and sole woman of the French New Wave, witness to radical social movements and sometimes their abettor, entrepreneur, traveler, friend to a long list of artistic geniuses, she in effect brings out of her purse more than fifty years' worth of assorted and idiosyncratic film clips, portrait photographs and snatches of music, not to mention some recently gathered views of places she's known.

"A puzzle," she calls her life's materials as she sorts and arranges them, "with a hole in the center." Or, to switch to the metaphor of her new film's title, the assemblage she makes looks like a meeting place of the elements, continually forming and slipping away: *The Beaches of Agnès*.

You see her, in a prologue set in Belgium, tromping barefoot on one of the North Sea beaches she enjoyed as a child. "If you opened people up, you'd find landscapes," Varda explains. "If you opened me up, you'd find beaches." Meanwhile, her assistants are setting up a multitude of mirrors on the sand, as if to prepare the filmmaker for her self-portrait. "Show me in an old spotted mirror," she advises, looking into one that almost completely obscures her face, "or with my scarf blowing like this," as she studies the effect of having her head completely covered. For the most part, Varda makes the reflections show only her young helpers and the waves, sky and dune grass. Things drift away and things abide, but the self who mourns and retains is elusive—perhaps willfully so. Varda scratches into the sand her original given name—Arlette—and watches the letters wash away. She speaks of the lone recording of classical music she heard as a child, and fragments of the piece rise on the soundtrack over the view of the North Sea: Schubert's Unfinished Symphony.

CINEMA GUILD

Agnès Varda in *The Beaches of Agnès*

Playful, quizzical, at times deliberately clownish, Varda claims the status of enigma in *The Beaches of Agnès*, saying in this prologue that she is only pretending to be eager to tell about herself, much as she's "playing at being an old lady" (this, at 79). "It's other people who move me," she declares. Considering the many characters who then figure in the film, and the love she lavishes on them all—from the baker down the street from her house to her late husband, Jacques Demy—I can believe her.

But permit me a little skepticism too. This short-statured, long-nosed woman with the mushroom-cut hair that keeps changing color throughout the film and the clothes that might have come from the trunk of a regional theater company is too compellingly intelligent a commentator, and too engaging a companion, not to be the star of her own life story. By the end of *The Beaches of Agnès*, you will know a lot about what she's achieved and how she's done it. You just won't learn this material in any order except the one in which she's been pleased to dump it out.

A surrealist of the tender and discursive sort (except when enraged), she enjoys curious juxtapositions and chance events and is willing to organize them if they don't produce themselves. In the seaside town of Sète, for example, where she spent her adolescence, she hauls out an old-fashioned handcart like the one seen in her first film, *La Pointe Courte*, and converts it into the platform for a little movie screen, so that two of her old friends can push it through the twilit lanes while watching a projected image of their long-dead father. It is an image, perhaps, of film as a humble funerary rite; by contrast, Varda also gives you an impression of film as a busy if accident-prone game. To represent the office of her production company, Ciné-Tamaris, she has a few tons of sand dumped into the middle of a Paris street and then installs her staff at desks on this "beach." A rainstorm blows in on the second day of shooting and destroys the set, but Varda greets the reversal with perfect equanimity. Her aesthetic, poised between mourning and play, has room for incompletion and happenstance. Besides, she's endured worse than the loss of a location.

As evidence, here are some of the photographs she took at the beginning of her career, in the late 1940s, when the actor and impresario Jean Vilar commissioned her to document his Avignon Festival. She was mortified, Varda recalls, when Vilar's gesturing right hand came out blurred in one picture of *Richard II*. Now, she says, she likes to see blurs in photographs, especially in the foreground. She lets the screen fill with a few examples of such incidentally messy images, with their evidence of a life too ongoing to be fully captured. Then she shows herself walking through an exhibition of her Avignon photographs—immaculately printed, blown up to more than life size, installed within the serene symmetry of a chapel—as she breaks down and weeps for all these beautiful people who are gone.

"All the dead," she confides to the camera, "lead me back to Jacques."

Her long relationship with Demy dominates her account of her filmmaking career. She credits him with getting her the opportunity to make *Cléo From 5 to 7*, discusses her visits to film festivals in the context of his triumphal progress, explains the course of her work in the 1960s in terms of her life with him on Noirmoutier Island and later in Los Angeles. But Demy is strangely absent from much of this narrative. Other family members, friends and colleagues appear prominently on the screen, in new or archival images—her children, Jane Birkin, Chris Marker (disguised as a cat)—but rarely Demy, except as a figure glimpsed through a courtyard window or a blurred white spot at the back of a production still from *The Umbrellas of Cherbourg*. He doesn't really become a presence in *The Beaches of Agnès* until Varda recounts the end of his life: his illness with AIDS, his composition of a memoir about

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his youth and her efforts to make this piece of his writing into the film that has stood for nearly the past twenty years as her final narrative feature, *Jacquot de Nantes*.

There's a production still that shows Varda at work in her director's chair, meanwhile reaching back to clasp hands with the husband she knew was dying. What slips away, and what you hold on to: to which did she dedicate *Jacquot de Nantes*? She would show Demy the scenes she was setting up, she recalls, and ask if they were accurate, and he'd tell her, "Yes. I can see myself in that." So it was important to her to have these re-creations of his life—unlike the re-creations of her own life that she inserts into *The Beaches of Agnès*, calling them "just a game." Varda says she doesn't quite get the point of dressing up a little girl in a swimsuit like the one she used to wear. For that matter, she confesses that she feels no connection to her childhood experiences and no emotion when revisiting the house where she grew up. (The retired physician who now owns the place, and who wants to show off his collection of model trains—he's something. "But the childhood home part is a flop.") I might guess, then, that the surrealist play of turning life into images becomes urgent for Varda mostly in retrospect, when the subject has gone or is going. If she doesn't take very seriously the images she creates of her past, it's perhaps because she's never lost herself.

And yet she turned 80 while making *The Beaches of Agnès*. Surely she felt her own mortality.

I'd say she did; and the wonder of this late masterpiece is that she acknowledges her mortality in it in three different ways, as everywoman, as a singular woman and as the hole in the puzzle—no woman at all.

As everywoman, she shows herself at the end posing happily under a tree with her children and grandchildren, dressed in white and standing a little apart from the others, as if already moving toward the next world. As a singular woman, she tacks a coda onto the film: a record of her raucous eightieth birthday celebration, with well-wishers trooping into her Paris headquarters to salute the aged great lady. But it's as no woman at all that she composes the third and most moving finale of *The Beaches of Agnès*, which consists of a view of a shack she constructed near the beach on Noirmoutier Island: little more than a frame enclosing an empty space.

You might say that Varda is the void in that shack, whose rippling, fragile walls, suspended from the frame, are strips of celluloid unspooled from a print of her mid-1960s film *Les Créatures*. There's nothing in the shack—and nothing to it, either—except for light, color and ghostly images of Catherine Deneuve and Michel Piccoli: something that's lost and preserved at the same time.

"I live in cinema," Varda concludes. "I feel I've lived here forever."

Originally presented at the 2008 Venice Film Festival, *The Beaches of Agnès* begins a US theatrical release on July 1, at Film Forum in New York City.

A blatant knockoff of *American Idol*, except that the female contestants get death threats, the Kabul-based television show *Afghan Star* has been passionately followed by as much as one-third of the country's population, according to a new documentary by director Havana Marking. Country boys hurried home through the fields to watch it. Girls in small towns, eager for good reception, climbed to their roofs to prop up antennas with rocks. Auditions for the program, held in cities throughout Afghanistan, attracted some 2,000 would-be contestants, three of whom were brave enough to be women. The weekly cellphone voting for audience favorites took on the character of a grassroots political campaign, with supporters of different singers making their headquarters in pool halls and used-car lots and even holding photo-ops in the courtyards of mosques. On the wisdom of this latter initiative, though, opinion was divided. The government-backed Islamic Council warned that the godless doings on *Afghan Star* would cause the faithful to rise up in war. And when the Taliban, for military purposes, began attacking the country's cellphone networks, one of the side benefits from their viewpoint was the disruption of voting for *Afghan Star*.

Marking's documentary, which shares a title with the TV show, follows the fortunes of four of the contestants—two women and two men—from different regions and ethnic groups, while also profiling the show's host (a defiant pop culturalist who ran a clandestine TV repair shop during the Taliban era) and a family of devoted fans (who remember the Soviet years as a golden age of rock music and mixed dancing). I tell you, *Afghan Star* has everything: suspense, pathos, humor, songs, landscapes and large-as-life characters. There is even a message: that the showbiz cheesiness we Americans might deride can be a source of hope for people literally dying to sing.

An audience favorite at the recent Human Rights Watch International Film Festival, *Afghan Star* opens in theaters June 26. ■

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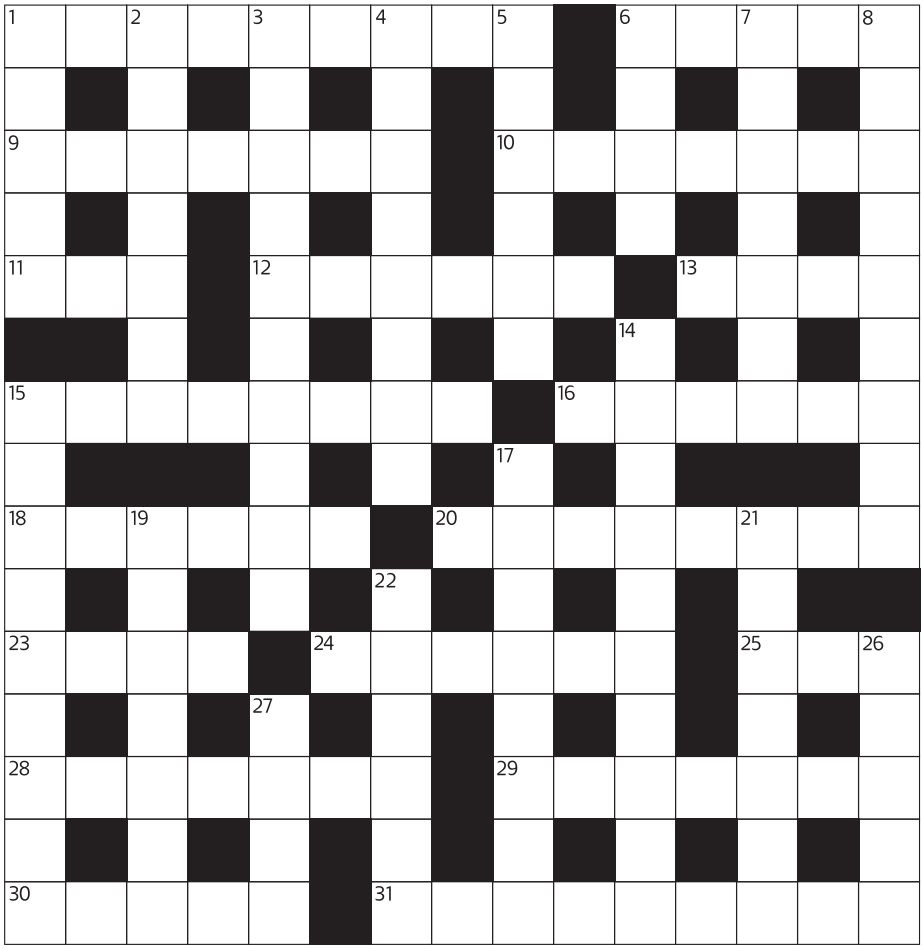

ACROSS

1 Some might say such a dessert is rather heavy. (5,4)

6 see 11

9 Not quite 20, if it makes you feel any better! (7)

10 They were worn once, back at a showing of old poets. (7)

11, 6 and **28** In succession you see the pursuer and the pursued. (3,5,7)

12 Bad credit can be this, as one might point out. (6)

13 The Egyptian goddess who exists twice? (4)

15 If you like to fiddle around with only large things, this could be your choice. (4,4)

16 In place of the oracle, I'd help make it. (6)

18 On the shoe or belt—or in the dish—you hope things don't give way so! (6)

20 Hoping to make a little more than 9? (8)

23 Ready to tackle anything in play? (4)

24 An atom to smash, and you can make soup out of it. (6)

25 A sweet one may be in the garden, but an ape et it up! (3)

28 see 11

29 A measure might be, but you have to choose to get sort of dead around it. (7)

30 Went overboard for this, just to act with little Theodore. (5)

31 Ready for the Easter parade? (7,2)

DOWN

1 A sign of soft music that could be played on it. (5)

2 An organization that brings up what you do at night shows what one does first with lots of fruit. (7)

3 Took a chance with bad things, being people used to risks. (4-6)

4 Using a common article, ran up to steal something in the wrong way in Michigan. (3,5)

5 Possibly a net result, having stolen jewelry to drag you in. (6)

6 A raised desk in an early Christian church, with the Lamb out to be shown. (4)

7 Brought up right in the pecan, for instance, just to eat a little bit, as the guest arrives. (5,2)

8 Refusing to go along with things is surrounded by what the non-doer is doing. (9)

14 Is there a point to wild mice and crazy loons being things that bring your thoughts to a temporary stopping place? (10)

15 The infant needs a thousand commonly just to make a 1 down. (4,5)

17 Take little notice when it's in a way to get free high-jinks! (8)

19 What a deb does is to form a small company with me, being finally not safe. (4,3)

21 A forged dime is about placed where it could be ascribed to a person. (7)

22 The letters sure do make something get turned bad. (6)

26 Most people don't do this—they put two and two together by going down the column. (Sensible things have to!) (3,2)

27 Take things off in the outhouse? (4)

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The Deadly Threat of a Nuclear-Armed Iran

What can the world, what can the USA, what can Israel do about it?

Iran's president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, has declared publicly – not once, but repeatedly – that Israel must be "wiped off the map." That effort, the destruction of Israel, seems to be the main goal of Iranian policy. When Iranian missiles are paraded through the streets of Tehran, the destination "to Jerusalem" is clearly stenciled on them.

What are the facts?

A death wish for Israel. Ahmadinejad and the ayatollah who is the "supreme leader" have publicly mused that one or two nuclear bombs would obliterate Israel, but that, though it would cause devastating damage and millions of casualties, Iran would survive Israel's retaliatory attack. Iran is a huge country, with about 60 million inhabitants, so they are probably correct. And who can doubt that those religious fanatics would not hesitate to allow the destruction of much of their country and to sacrifice a third or even one-half of their population in order to eliminate the hated Jewish state. When our country was entangled with the Soviet Union in the bitter 40-year long "cold war," with both sides having sufficient nuclear weapons to destroy the opponent's country and its people, things were kept in place by MAD – Mutually Assured Destruction. However "evil" the leaders of the Soviet Union (the "Evil Empire") may have been, there was one great consolation and assurance: They were not crazy. But the Iranians and other Muslims are crazies, as we understand the concept. Because they take instructions directly from Allah, who tells them to kill the Jews and other infidels, whatever the cost.

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Israel has no problem with Iran. They share no borders and have no territorial dispute. In fact, they face common Arab enemies and should be natural allies, as they indeed were under the Shah. Iran's death wish for Israel is based entirely on religious fanaticism. In contrast even to the intractable North Koreans, the determination of the Iranians is immutable. It cannot be changed by persuasion, by diplomacy, by sanctions or by threats.

Once Iran is in possession of nuclear weapons, it will not only be a deadly danger to Israel, but to all of the Middle East and to virtually all of Europe. The flow of oil from the Middle East, the lifeblood of the industrialized world, would be totally under its control and so would be the economies of all nations of the world, very much including the United States.

What is to be done? In 1981, then prime minister of Israel Menachem Begin, being aware of Iraq's nuclear ambitions and looming realization of those ambitions, decided that its nuclear reactor at Osiraq had to be destroyed. The IAF (Israeli Air Force) accomplished that in a daring and unprecedented raid. Iraq's nuclear capability was eliminated in one stroke, never to rise up again. Israel had done the world an enormous service. Had it not been for Israel's decisive action, the Iraqi conquest of Kuwait and, without question, also of Saudi Arabia and its enormous oil fields, and, for that matter, of Iran, could not have been prevented. Saddam Hussein would have been the ruler of the world.

The solution to the deadly threat that Iran poses to the world is obvious. Of course, diplomacy and persuasion, threats and promises, sticks and carrots – every possible means short of military action – should be used until it becomes clear even to the most obdurate that nothing can deviate Iran from its chosen path of becoming a nuclear power and to dominate the Middle East.

There is reason to believe that the people of Iran, especially the young people, oppose the oppressive and theocratic regime of their country and are hostile to the mullahs who control everything. But the government has the tools of power firmly in its hands. It controls the instruments of coercion – it can kill people and it controls the oil money. While it would be most desirable and in the interest of the world to be able to foment an overthrow of the Iranian regime, that is an unrealistic and unattainable prospect.

Regrettably, there is only one solution to the terrible dilemma confronting the world, the unacceptable danger of a nuclear-armed Iran. The terror, the destruction and the 60 million dead of World War II could have been prevented at several times during the Nazi regime. But the Allied powers, under the leadership of Britain's prime minister Neville Chamberlain, opted for appeasement and for "peace in our time." We cannot afford to make that same mistake again. The world must give Iran an ultimatum: Desist immediately from the development of nuclear weapons; if you do not, we shall destroy the facilities that produce them. There still is a window of opportunity to do that. That window may close very soon. But who would do the job? The United States would be the obvious choice. But if the United States were in accord, Israel could do it, just as it did the job in 1981 in destroying Iraq's nuclear potential once and for all.

An attack on the Iranian nuclear installations would fall under the heading of "anticipatory self-defense," recognized and sanctioned by international law and by common sense. Nobody really knows for sure how far Iran is from reaching its goal — six months. six years? The experts disagree. But if Iran is not stopped now, it may well be too late not very long from now.

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When Unions Fight Each Other,

WORKERS LOSE

The conflict between Workers United/SEIU and UNITE HERE is hurting workers and must end now. Both unions should agree to submit differences to binding arbitration so that the issues between them can be resolved.

Each day that passes without a resolution harms thousands of workers in hundreds of workplaces across North America.

They must get back not only to the crucial work of representing workers, but also resuming their work with the rest of the Labor Movement and progressive community to fight for the interests, values and goals of working families.

We have an extraordinary opportunity to achieve reforms that will improve the lives of working families for generations to come. A resolution to this dispute must be achieved to turn the page, work together and seize this opportunity.

Negotiate. Arbitrate. End the Dispute Now.

"The managers are taking advantage of the fact that the union is stuck in a fight with another union...I have spoken to other workers who were pretty dedicated to the campaign that are now full of doubt...workers have started to feel worried, disappointed, and let down."

—Maritza Vazquez, Propper International garment worker, Lajas, Puerto Rico

"Laundry workers in California need our union to be able to help us get a new contract, not fight our old union."

—Francisco Castaneda, laundry worker, San Jose, California

"For months, my co-workers and I stood up to our employer, demanding fair treatment and the right to organize. Recently [UNITE HERE] took actions to stop the recognition of my union and stall bargaining. Hotel workers...should never be used as pawns in your inter-union conflict."

—Diane Barnim, hotel housekeeper, St. Catherines, Ontario, Canada

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